

ELECTRONIC MUSIC AND ART

interface

version 3.2

magazine



alien faktor
attrition
crash worship
front line assembly
hate dept.
idiot stare
mentallo and the fixer
jean luc de meyer
ministry
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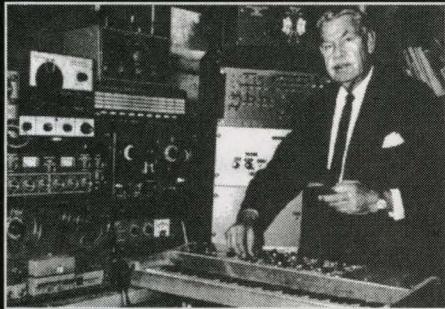
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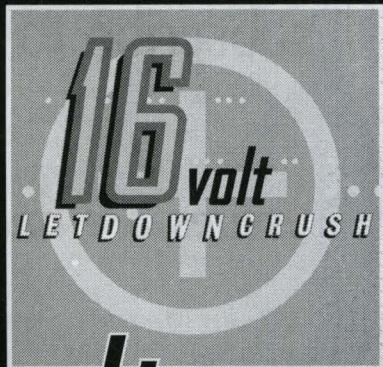


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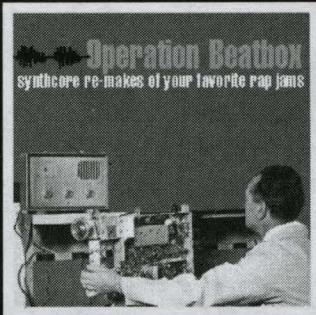
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magazine
electronic music and art

version 3.2

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interface is devoted to the use of computers and other electronic devices as tools to create quality music and art; the microprocessor is a valid medium.

business & subscriptions:

2166 Seven Pines Drive, St. Louis MO 63146-2216 USA

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interface@transmission23.com

www:

<http://www.transmission23.com/interface>

cover price \$3.00

subscriptions \$10 for 4 issues

newsstand circulation:

BigTop Publisher Services

call 415.974.1544 or fax 415.974.1328

interface magazine, electronic music and art
ISSN 1081-8065 is published and © 1996 by:

steel skin media group

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steel skin is a clothing optional employer.

interface magazine is created using Macintosh computers.
body font - flux, headline font - konfakur;
both available from [T-26] (<http://www.t26.com>)

thank you, drive through.

BABEL BABBLE

This is the part where I get brutally honest and probably piss a few people off. O.K. Here it is: music today sucks. There, I said it. I feel much better. So, as much as I know that we'd all like to fool ourselves into thinking that we are plugged into (pun intended) some amazingly hip scene here; I know it, you know it, even my fucking Mom knows it. New, underground music today is not as good as it has been in recent memory. If you think about it, it kind of goes along with who is in the throne at the White House, in a weird, convoluted way. During Ronald Reagan's reign, music was really amazing, and the late Eighties saw that peak with Bush in office. Well, 1988 came and soon after, George Bush took us to many a war, against Iraq, against ourselves; it was a mess. Electronic music peaked as we stared into apocalypse. With Clinton, boredom and apathy in the once viral underground as we concerned ourselves less with topical themes. It's too bad Bob Dole didn't win so that we could have had yet another fascist in there to stir some shit up and scare the piss (christ) out of us.

As it stands, I get way too many CDs from new bands that insist on existing purely as regurgitated crap. Too many Skinny Puppies or Front 242s or Derrick Mays. The bands that are still around from that era pretty much have tapped the vein dry and too many of the new bands are trying to recapture the magical time of the innovators. Don't get me wrong, there are some great new bands out there, who I won't list here for fear of alienating people more than I already am. But the simple fact is that very few of the new bands are really doing anything totally new. It wasn't like there haven't been some high points and that there weren't low points in the past, there have been lots of both, but as the imitators outnumber the innovators, subcultures shift and art moves forward. It's been too long since we've had a completely new subculture. All of the various current subcultures seem stuck in a rut, picking the carcass of past glories. All of them: goth (vampyre), punk (gutter-punk), industrial (noise), electro (torture-tech), techno (house), etc. etc. As we move on in time, the periods of innovation get shorter and shorter and new subcultures need to replace the old ones. It's time for a drastic new subculture to move in a swoop down on the boring suburban homes and pretentious urban niteclubs like an attack fleet of Martian spaceships (blatant ref to Tim Burton's new movie). The fact that there are so many stupid, fucking tribute albums out there speaks volumes to this end. When the creative well is tapped dry, let's see if we can suck some more out of our idols. Do we really need to puke up our influences into an embarrassing mess of lame tribute albums? I don't think so.

What I think needs to happen is for new artists to give up trying to emulate those who came before them, but without forsaking the influence their elders had on them and really, truly innovate. It's acceptable to be influenced by something, but it should really stop there. So stop being copycats and start making some truly new music ya fucks.

Andy Waggoner

editor

(still trying to find the innate beauty in it all.)

If you would like to respond to this, please send letters and email with intelligent recourse to my attention, P.O. Box 1209, Chicago, IL 60690-1209.

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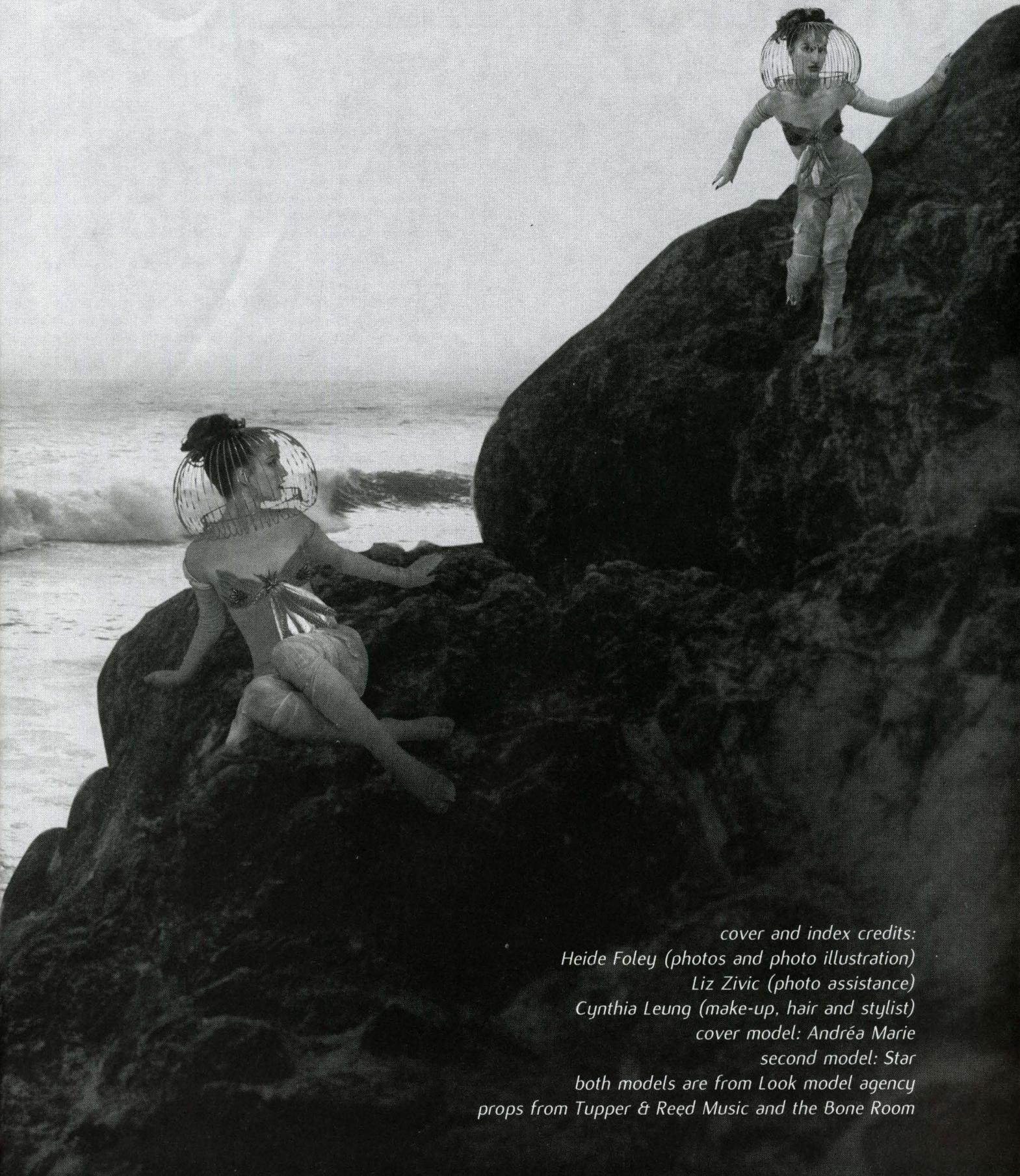
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a bunch of stuff on a handy reference sheet

new releases

Arcanta EP Projekt Records
Chemlab East Side Militia Fifth Column Records
Cyrnai Transfiguration Titanium Records
Deep mobile Thickface Records
Firewater Get Off The Cross... Jetset Records
God's Girlfriend Whore Damage Tinman Records
Jagd Wild Come Join The Hunt KSM Records
Masonna inner mind mystique Release Entertainment
Vidna Obmana The River of Appearance Projekt Records
PICA The Doctors Ate the Evidence Release Entertainment
Pig Sinsation Nothing/Interscope Records
Ruby Stroking The Full-Length Creation/Sony Records
Steve Roach, Stephen Kent, Kenneth Newby Halcyon Days Fathom Records
Scorn Logghi Barogghi Earache Records
Spacetime Continuum remit recaps Astralwerks Records
The Tear Garden To Be An Angel Blind, The Crippled Soul Divide Nettwerk Records
Technohead Headsex Mokum/Roadrunner Records
various artists The Future Sound of Jazz Instinct Records
various artists The Goth Box Cleopatra Records
various artists House AG DIN Ai Records
various artists Make 'em Mokum Crazy Mokum/Roadrunner Records

new labels

Thickface Records: [t-26], the font foundry that released almost all of the fonts that we've used to revamp *interface*, has started a label. The first release is *Deep*, featuring Jim Marcus (*Die Warzau*) and Jason Moore (ex-*My Scarlett Life*), which has a dark ethno-ambient vibe. The second release will be Marcus' new band, *Everplastic*, with yet another all-star line-up, has ex-members of *Sister Machine Gun* and *the Sugarcubes*. Don't expect anything like any of those bands, though. The show last fall with *Christ Analogue* was much more tribal and funky than anything.

Feedback Records: Feedback is sub-label of Decibel records which was started to focus more on experimental releases, the first of which was release by *Impact Test* had hand made covers. The new release by *Sirvix, Her Dead Love*, is more readily available.

Hakatak Records: Paul Robb (ex-*Information Society*) has a new band and label; *Think Tank* and *Hakatak* respectively. See our review of Think Tank's *Skullbuggery* in this issue for more info.

new technologies

DTS Technology, who released a new digital surround technology this past June, now has more hardware licensees for this new technology and new CDs and Laserdiscs made for it. Expect consumer products probably around Winter Solstice 1997.

go girl!

The *Hearts of Space* label from San Francisco is the face of the radio program uncovering artists creating space music. As a label, along with sub-labels *Fathom* and *RGB Records*, HOS is one of the brightest and exciting groups of indies that we've come across in a while. Consistently top-notch releases by world-class (and often world music) musicians fostering a communal vibe with artists on the label often working together, such as *Steve Roach* and *Robert Rich*. From releases by *D'Cuckoo*, to *Paul Haslinger* (ex-*Tangerine Dream*), *Hearts of Space* is easily one of the best choices for safe bets on good music by innovative artists.

Chase at *Re-Constriction Records* is one of the few people in the underground electronic scene who has a goddamn sense of humor anymore and isn't scared to wield it. One of the biggest motivators and networkers around, Chase never fails to entertain us with great comps and (sometimes) hidden messages in his ads and the album artwork for the comps, the newest of which is *Operation: Beat Box*, which has some of the best new electro bands covering classic hip-hop songs. Keep up the good work Chase.

new staff

As of this issue, we have even more new writers. *Rik Milhouse*, publisher of *Cyberlogue* and *Veronica Kirchoff*, publisher of the late *Levity* and now an on-line zine, are writing for us. Also aboard is *Brian Rowe* from *Connect the Dots Music*, who will be reviewing ambient music. *Paul Seegers* of the late *Arc* magazine is also doing some writing. *Michael Woodring* and *Ingo Mieir* are also doing reviews. Welcome aboard to all of you. If you are interested in submitting to *interface*, please call or write for submission guidelines.

links

The *interface* magazine, electronic music and art website is up at <http://transmission23.com/interface>. We will be adding lots to the site, so check it regularly. Our site was kindly donated by the staff at transmission 23 (www.transmission23.com), an avant garde music, art and literature BBS turned web site.

One of the cooler web sites I've been to recently is the *Hyperreal* web site (www.hyperreal.com). A collective of labels, bands and magazines with a common bond: electronic music. Most of the contributions are techno, but there's a hint of experimental post-industrial with the magazine *EMT*. Lots of info and contacts to mull through.

Mixmaster Morris, the ambient DJ who promotes "the Global Chillage," runs a site called, appropriately, *A Site for Sore Ears* (<http://www.southern.com/mmm>). Links and info for lots of ambient Record Labels, info and background for MMM himself and a complete event listing for MMM, who is seemingly constantly "on tour" spinning ambient at events the world over.

If you have an interest in comic books and SciFi (who in their right mind doesn't?), check out the *AntiGravity Room*, a Canadian produced tv show airing on *SciFi Channel*. They have a web site, www.antigrav.com, and you can email them at antigravity@ytv.ca.

At *Fangoria*'s Weekend of Horrors convention this July, we got a preview of the Special Edition *Star Wars* movies that are being rereleased next spring into theatres by *Lucasfilms*. Something like \$10 million went into revamping the old movies, adding in CGI effects and touching up any mistakes from the matte shots of the originals. Looks flawless. Lucasarts also has a new set of multimedia products for the hardcore Star Wars fan; *Shadows of the Empire* is coming to us in several parts. A book from Random House, a comic book series from Dark Horse Comics, toys from Kenner and a video game for *Nintendo 64*, the new system. Clips of the video game in development are stunning. The story takes place in the time between *The Empire Strikes Back* and *Return of the Jedi*. Check it out.

compiled by andy waggoner

attrition

Martin Bowes of the British darkwave band, Attrition, speaks with a bit of levity when talking about music. But it's not as though he is without a need to experiment, and over ten years of making music has offered Martin a solid foundation to grow from. Known for their combination of traditional, classical arrangements and instrument sounds with synthesizers, Attrition is the obvious child of someone like Martin. With a stunning mixture of the angelic female vocals of Julia Wallers and Martin's dark growl, the electronic dance beats punctuate the soft strings. The rich viola sounds on *3 arms and a dead cert*, the newest album on Hyperium in Europe and Darkwave here in the States (see review p. 23), were provided by Franck Dematteis, a long-time fan of Attrition and member of the Paris opera. While Attrition has long since been using these sounds, this is the first time that a live musician was brought into the studio. The resulting quality of sound is instantly noticeable. The differences between sampling a live musician and synthesizing the sound are obvious.

Attrition's unique sound has earned them a loyal fan base, but one that leans to an amount that is shockingly small in number for a band of this ability whose career has spanned this length of time and whose music has received the praise theirs has. Recently, the band has had more success in Germany, but that may be attributed to being signed to Hyperium. "It depends on what label that we're on. What country the label is in, they're going to do the most promotion." But even when Attrition were on Third Mind, a British label, sales still lacked in England. "We found that we sold more in Europe and America. Electronic music's never been very big in England, unless it's Depeche Mode." American response has been increasing of late, as well as the growth in Germany. The tour this summer may help things along, too.

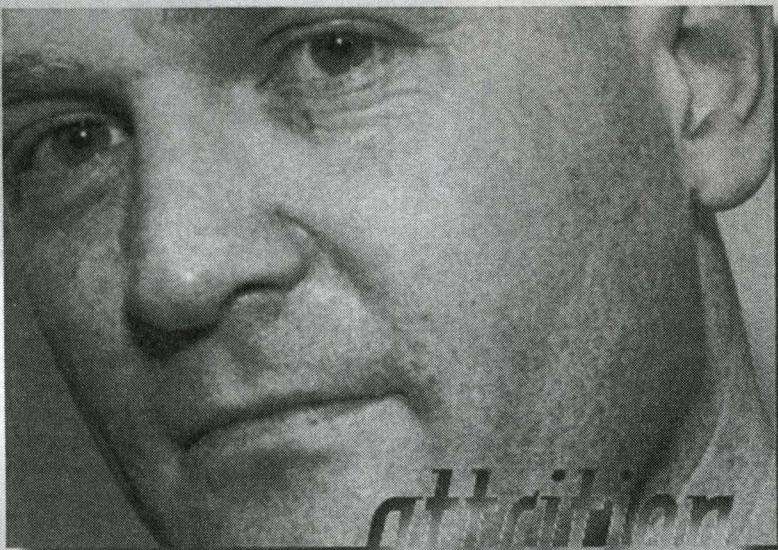
Even though Attrition is known for their use of synthesizers and samplers, the first four shows over ten years ago didn't have any electronics at all. Just guitar, bass and drums. They were influenced by the music they

listened to; Cabaret Voltaire, Joy Division and P.I.L. as well as other post-punk bands. After that, they really got into electronics and got rid of their guitarist; Bowes' brother! They got a synth and it grew from there. Getting rid of the drummer was the next step and the band went all electronic at that point. Not that Attrition was started with any definite sound in mind. The loose experimental vibe of the post-punk, non-MTV New Wave played a large role in early Attrition's sound. Bowes was creating a fanzine at the time and was around bands a lot at the time. The idea of "doing something myself" came after being exposed to the resurgence of the music scene at the time. As with most punk bands, it wasn't really serious at first, but that changed. "You just sort of muck around with friends, you know. I just thought, 'hang on, maybe something's coming together.' I've never been in any other bands before. It's been a long time in Attrition, but it's the only thing I've done."

Is it difficult to put in the varied emotions that Attrition uses, from the harder aggression material to the more soft goth stuff? Do electronics play into it? "It's difficult, but I don't think it matters what instruments you use. It suits me and I like using electronic sounds. I like getting someone in to play violin as well. I like the mixture, really. That's the ideal way, using whatever you want. It would be nice to get a hold of an orchestra, it would be nice to have one, but sometimes you can't and you have to use a sample. We've got the male and female vocals, too. It keeps it from being too aggressive. I like that. Sometimes, with some bands, it gets a bit one dimensional when it's just aggressive or just a female. We've got a lot of bit of both sides."

Martin prefers to synthesize sounds and program them from scratch, unless of course he has a professional classical musician to come in for him to sample. His old analogs are still around from the early days, too. Using Novation's Bass-Station, Martin uses the MIDI to CV convertor built-in to the unit to sequence his old equipment. The Korg MS-20, the original synth that Attrition relied on early on, Martin sampled and looped sections off of the Korg MS-20 for the tour. While he feels this is cheating a bit, it allows him to not have to worry about an analog synth going out of tune or changing any patches like the early days.

Since Attrition's history has spanned the scope of electronic evolution, one wonders if innovations like MIDI effected Martin's song-writing. "Yeah, it has changed it. You can get a lot more going on in a song. If you've got an idea of something, you're more likely going to be able to get it. You just couldn't do with an 808. I sold my 808 when it wasn't trendy for about £100. I could get about £900 now! [with MIDI instruments], you can do a lot more, but it doesn't make it any easier to write songs. That's still a process that comes from inside you and none of the technology can help that. It does mean you can reach the ideas of songs you couldn't have done before. I like writing lyrics and there's no technology that helps with that. It's just a pen and paper. It's a nice change from being in the studio with all the gear to get away from all the technology. Sometimes you end up with so much technology that there's always something going wrong and you're forever fixing things. It takes a half an hour to pinpoint what might be going wrong."



martin bowes (photo: chuck przybyl)

end

jean luc de meyer

The emotive and powerful singer, Jean Luc de Meyer, is known as one of the best in the electronic music field for his work with pioneers Front 242, and rightfully so. De Meyer's voice, coupled with incredible electronic body music, a term which Front 242 coined and a genre they encapsulated, made such waves that they are still being felt today. Today, de Meyer is still an influence in the EBM scene.

In late 1995, *Cyber-Tec Records* in England released an EP by a project that featured de Meyer on vocals. The *Cyber-Tec project*, as the band is called, brought a refreshing resurgence to a music scene that needed revitalizing. Along with Ged Demon of Crisis NTI and Marc Heal of Cubanate, two British EBM bands, Cyber-Tec was that breath of fresh air.

De Meyer's newest band, *Cobalt 60*, the 1st LP of which was just released, is already getting great words of praise from both sides of the ocean. Being called by some a worthy replacement for Front 242, if their permanent demise ever came about. This new release finds de Meyer in a new band with new aspirations.

I/F: How has it been for you to go from being in a major label act to releasing work on smaller labels?

JL: Like rediscovering the meaning of freedom and trust.

I/F: What is the state of the Belgian scene?

JL: The Belgian scene at the moment is very weak with a few exceptions such as Dive and Suicide Commando.

Are you anxious for a big tour again?

JL: Not really. I am not ready in any way to tour in bad conditions. I think we will until the LP is released and decide whether or not to tour and where.

I/F: What happened to cause the cancellation of the handful of American shows for Cyber-Tec earlier this year?

JL: We were verbally proposed touring conditions that were OK, but none of them were reflected in the final written contract we were presented when we arrived in the US, so we packed and left right after the New York show.

I/F: Any definite plans for a future tour?

JL: We will play several gigs in Europe then record the LP and see...

I/F: How has it been working with Ged as well as the other members of Cubanate?

JL: Ged Demon is not in Cubanate. Marc Heal of Cubanate recently joined the Cyber-Tec Project to replace Jonathan Sharp. Marc and Ged are really nice guys and talented musicians. I immensely enjoy working with them. There's a great vibe among the three of us and I hope it will never die.

I/F: Do you have a bigger role in Cyber-Tec than you did in Front 242?

JL: I do almost the same, which is to write the lyrics and to sing. I don't want to interfere anyhow in the music, because that's not what I'm the best at. The biggest difference is that in the Cyber-Tec Project, the place of the vocals in the whole concept is more important.

I/F: What is the current state of Front 242? Are you still working with them?

JL: Front 242 is currently dormant. The members work on separate projects. We might work together again in the future, but not in 1996.

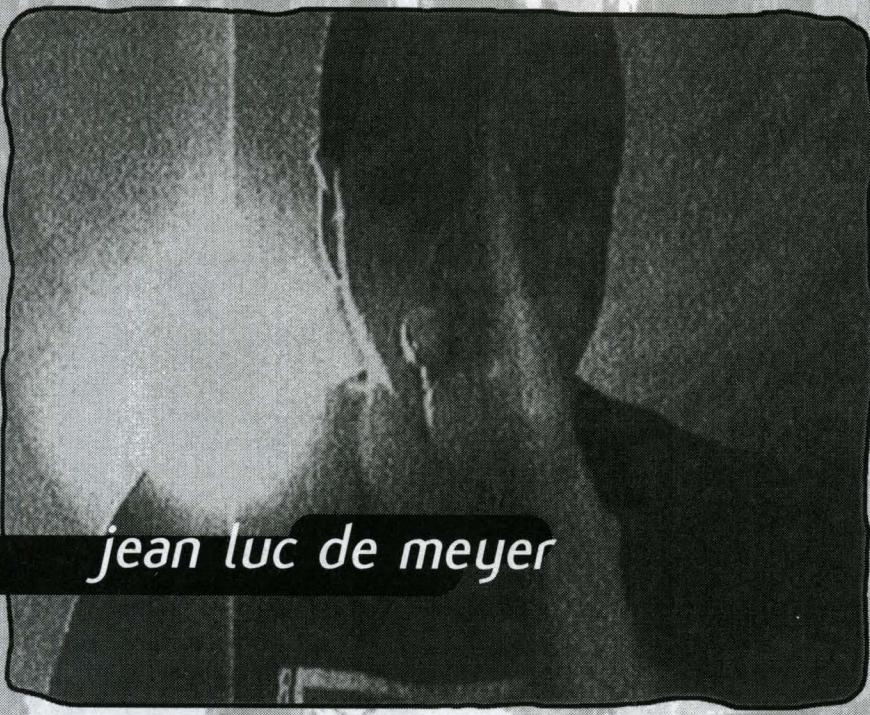
I/F: What was your role in Art & Strategy?

JL: I was one of the three founders of Art and Strategy in 1991 with Daniel and Patrick (of Front

242). I was responsible for all the legal, official, bureaucratic paperwork and this was taking a hell of a time! I left the company in 1993 to create mine.

I/F: What does the future hold for you? Any plans?

JL: Only good things, I know it. I know I still have tons of things to live and learn. My girlfriend left me some months ago after 10 years spent together. I'm currently learning to live alone again, discovering sanity and happiness in small and simple things, making tons of new friends, learning how to love more and better and I know one day, I will be ready to find my soul sister. Isn't that the most exciting of all possible plans?



jean luc de meyer

hate dept.

Seldom is one able to alienate the whole of his surroundings and, in the process, realize a sort of twisted, confounded respectability. This seemingly paradoxical apex is where Hate Dept. thrives, capable of being all things to all people. If you go into a Hate Dept. show expecting to be personally insulted and disrespected, you will be. If you go into the show expecting to be entertained humorously at someone else's expense, you will be. If you go into the show expecting to see an energetic delivery and hear infectious music, you will. If you expect to see male hormones on parade, you will. If you expect to see sensitivity, you will. The only thing you won't see at a Hate Dept. show, or hear on a Hate Dept. CD, is apathy.

In May of 1992, Hate Dept. was born from the remnants of Cupid Falling. "Cupid Falling was electro-confusion," says lead singer/songwriter Seibold. "I was following in the footsteps of Skinny Puppy (Rabies era) with a splash of Cabaret Voltaire. Hate Dept. in essence was to be a continuation of that band. Drummer Steven Ortiz and I decided to continue on with our synth project, and I introduced the possibility of being a punk band instead. We recruited our 'punk' or 'industrial' acquaintances to join us. We were somewhat confused about how to treat the fickle 'electro-industrial' audiences at the time, but went forward anyhow."

Going forward meant developing some plan of attack: How would they illicit the response and involvement so lacking in the genre? These guys had played the scene and had a bone to pick; not only were they dissatisfied with the shape of things, they were downright pissed off. Instead of sitting and stewing in it, they decided to stir things up a bit. At least then, they wouldn't be the only ones who were pissed off.

"I have a very short attention span for glorified garage bands," says Seibold. "In this scene we call 'industrial' or, even more so, 'gothic,' audiences seem more taken by their own presence and appearance than interested in music. How annoying."

True to their name, Seibold set out to master the fine art of constructive hate. Four years and several members later, after countless insults and assaults and what must be gallons of mucus and saliva, audiences are as entranced and insulted as ever, and Hate Dept. is as passionately regarded as ever. Whatever side of the fence you're on, whether you love them or hate them, your stance is likely quite solid.

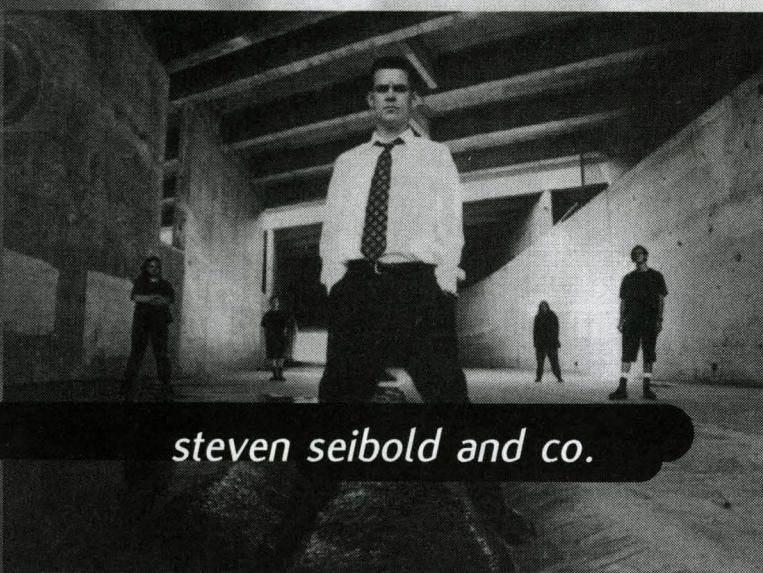
What does Seibold feel he's accomplished in this time? "We play well and sound good, yet care much, much less," he says. "I feel that I am actually doing what I set out to do. I communicate with music; I talk to myself mostly, but that is what lonely people do. I am here to affect people, and I'm getting better and better at it. Accomplishment is in the eyes of the beholder. Hate Dept. grows uncontrollably like a weed; that seems like accomplishment."

Since their inception, the band has enjoyed many ups and endured many downs. The only current member, aside from Seibold, left from the original incarnation is drummer Charles Hunt, who used to play keyboards. Now on keyboards is Ryan Daily; on guitar, Coby Bassett. After parting ways with electronic percussionist Shawn Sutherland, the band embarked on their longest and most grueling tour in June, the Omnipresent Tour '96, which wrapped up August 5 in Los Angeles. The ups and down continued, including last-minute cancellations through no fault of the band, 15-hour overnight drives with a show to play the next day, and overzealous Canadian border guards who just knew they'd find something in one of those equipment cases (little did they know, all they'd find were vitamins, aspirin and antacid). Nonetheless, the band maintains that they love touring and have never once thought of throwing in the towel.

"It's very exciting to us. We love to travel and perform... piss off someone new. The idea makes me tingle inside," says Seibold. "I've never wanted to throw in the towel. Maybe wash it, but never throw it in."

Speaking of pissing off people, "one favorite show was in Bakersfield, California," he continues. "I insulted the audience. I spit on a patron and his friend. He threw his glass beer mug at me, and it smashed into the wall over Charles' head. His friend also hurled his mug at me. That hit the wall behind Coby. The first pitcher jumped on stage and tried to punch me in the face. I was able to push him off hard enough that he landed on his back on the dance floor. He and his stupid little friend got kicked out. I glowed that night."

At another show, Seibold jumped off the stage and approached an audience member who obviously had something to say. When confronted, the drunken club-goer asked, "Why do you keep saying 'fuck'? Seibold was close enough to the man that his question was broadcast over the entire club through Seibold's headset microphone. The audience burst into laughter at the man's inane inquiry, and Seibold went on about his business. After the show, who should appear backstage, pool stick in hand, falling over his own feet, but the



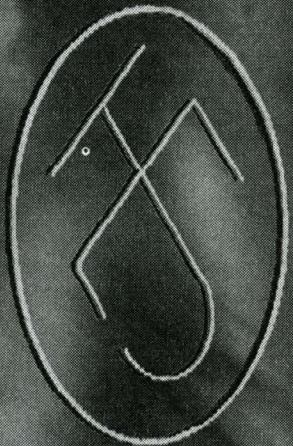
steven seibold and co.

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welcomed

hate department continued

sullen surveyor. A brawl ensued, which consisted mostly of the drunk man struggling against himself and the pool stick, after which he was led away by security.

Warnings and threats of retribution for his stage antics are nothing new, says Seibold. "I've been threatened and warned in ways that made the little hairs on the back of my neck stand up. Most comments, warnings and threats, especially when made when I am miles from earshot, simply get thrown into the forgettable bullshit pile. I might pay attention if I got a black eye once in my performing career. Never once has a badass, tattooed, pierced, muscle bound, rail thin, drug addict, homosexual, minority, promoter, club owner, man, woman or child, etc. ever, I mean ever, had the nerve to come up to me after a show and kick my ass."

The band has performed in several disparate locales, including a swap meet frequented by homies and gangstas, a nudist colony and a gay bar. They've been quoted as saying that they'll play anywhere that will have them, and this is the truth. Even under unfavorable circumstances, when it would have been just as easy (easier, actually) for them to pack up and move on to their next destination, they've gone on stage and given it their all. Their dedication to the music and the fans overrules any personal preoccupations. How can this be, if they're so full of hate?

"I hate generally, not specifically," says Seibold. "Everything, generally, pisses me off. Not specifically. I love the idea that our actions haunt us; melt me with a conversation about karma. Tell me how important honesty and compassion towards those who don't deserve it is, and I'll fall asleep in your arms. I find that no one is as forgiving as I am; my compassion runs too deep. However, used as an excuse for personal failure, not taking responsibility, I abhor."

Such seemingly contradictory values and philosophies (hate everything, yet show compassion toward those who don't deserve it) are not uncommon, as one quickly finds out after such a conversation with Seibold. There are so many twists and turns in the maze of his character, one begins to doubt that there is a path to the center. Much of this convolution found its way to light on the latest album, *Omnipresent*.

"I am from the land of easily moved," explains Seibold. "I tormented for a month after I completed *Omnipresent*. I lost weight and made myself sick with uncertainty - insecurity, possibly. There is too much of me on *Omnipresent*. I dug a bit too deep... oops. meat.your.maker was different. I was different then. I had a very punk attitude toward that record; I said to myself upon its completion, 'There! Perfect! I hope everyone hates it... hahahaaaaaa!'"

With so many conflicting messages surrounding the band, from the music to Seibold himself, what does he feel is the biggest misconception people have about them? "That we give a shit," he says matter-of-factly. "That I am either homophobic or a racist. I'm a pop-off. It's earned me a reputation."

And when all is said and done, how does he want Hate Dept. to be remembered? "Those guys sucked."

end

front line assembly

I/F: How would you compare the styles of *Tactile Neural Implant* and *Millennium* with the new CD *Hard Wired*?

BL: I think *Hard Wired* is a culmination of the last three albums. It has all of our signatures, all of our trade marks. On *Millennium*, we wanted to experiment with guitars, there are parts that we gave an almost metal feel. The guitars out front, and we didn't use guitar samples, but real guitars. I would have to say that *Hard Wired* is everything we have learned and dealt with in the last seven years or so.

I/F: Did the use of fewer guitars on *Hard Wired* have anything to do with you signing to OffBeat Records, and has hanging around with Haujobb influenced the resurgence of your electro style?

BL: (Laughing) Well, we really didn't hang out with Haujobb. I mean we met them one night, and they are nice guys. We never hung out with anyone in particular, we were pretty busy. I guess you could say every album, *Caustic Grip* or *TNI* has its own identity and, love or hate *Millennium*, we presented it in a totally different way.

I/F: I loved *Caustic Grip*.

BL: And that was one of the most simplistic. We did it with the least gear and we did it in this little bedroom. We never want to make the same record twice. Be that as it may, we pissed a lot of people off, but as artists, it is our responsibility to try different things. People expect FLA to sound a certain way. It gets boring doing one style of music, I think that is why we do all the side projects. I need to do that, or fuck, I would go crazy. I think *Hard Wired* is perfect for the nineties. It has everything Front Line is about. The guitars are presented in a different way, probably how we should have done them on *Millennium*, but you just don't know how things are going to turn out.

I/F: Is Rhys leaving the band, and has he somewhat influenced you because he is something of a metal head?

BL: I have known Rhys for something like 10 years, and it is not like anyone is leaving anything. We are starting on the new *Delirium* tomorrow. The last *Delirium* is about to go gold and the video won an award from Canada's *Much Music* (Canadian MTV equivalent), and has turned into a hit for Nettwerk.

I/F: I really have a lot of respect for Nettwerk. I am a fan of Manufacture and Sarah McLaughlin....

BL: Sarah McLaughlin is going to sing on the new *Delirium* for us. Right now *Delerium* is out selling Front Line. So no, no one is leaving. Rhys loves to do the *Delirium* stuff. He likes to play those big keyboard chords.

I/F: What do you think of the Internet? Do you use it?

BL: It is pretty cool. I think it is great that some guy in Montana can log on to the latest and greatest things. I think the corporations will spoil it. I guess the only thing about the Internet that bothers me is people have too much time on their hands and read too deeply into things, that's how rumors get started. Taking things apart. (referring to the break-up rumor) You know it is just like your girlfriend, you can't be around her all the time. I think when Rhys goes and works with other people or when I do, and we come back together, we bring new things with us, but you always have people you have to explain this to.

Rhys Fulcher and Bill Leeb of front line assembly

I/F: You had said in an earlier interview that *Millennium* could be the last album for FLA. You sounded frustrated and this concerned me because I think FLA represents the future of music.

BL: In a scene I could never understand, like in Europe, 95% of our shows are sold out, even though *Tactical* was a good American tour, we just can't seem to break in the U.S. I mean it's like old punk rock. I really dug the Sex Pistols and the Clash in their time, now look at Green Day. They are massive. I guess some bands break ground for other bands.

I/F: I know a lot of people who consider FLA as influential, and a lot of other bands are making money....

BL: Well, overexposure can also work against you. Some bands don't build a base, maybe have a hit that gets overplayed. I mean turn that off. Things me and Rhys do will come of age.

I/F: How about the video for "Plasticity"?

We got a real nice video for it playing on *Much Music* (Canadian music station).

I/F: Any chance of seeing it on MTV here in the states?

BL: MTV is like the Tyrell Corporation (from *Blade Runner*). They are like this big evil empire. Basically they make or break every band in America. You get on MTV and get rotation and you will sell a couple million records, worst case scenario.

I/F: I just saw the new Marilyn Manson video on MTV the other night, and I thought to myself that Trent Reznor is the Gene Roddenberry of post-industrial music, you work with him, and no matter how bad your stuff is, you get the support from MTV and his fans.

BL: Well, I have gotten beyond begrudging anyone's success. I try to do more and think more of pushing the envelope. Trent Reznor is too caught up in the who is who, who should I tour with to make my next million. Do I tour with Bowie or do a Christmas album with Sinatra...? He has already come to that point where it is all too calculated. He has become this big corporate rock mogul. The only thing left for Trent to happen is to make the next big album, or have it flop. He hasn't tasted failure. Especially in America, they love to build you up, and tear you down strip by strip. He hasn't dealt with that part yet, and that is when the real thing shines through. Will you pick up the pieces, do something new. Right now it seems to be the big corporate money thing. I don't think it has anything to do with being an artist.

front line assembly continued

I/F: When I was in England and Scotland last year, I noticed that you could hear anything on the radio. Techno, classic rock, celtic. Programming is not pigeon holed. I wonder if this is a problem with radio only in the U.S?

BL: Well, yes, and no. I mean the college stations are great, if you can get on them. It is like this 60's enigma of long straight hair and secretary's glasses, you know, whatever. Good for them. It is like going to a theater where Ridley Scott has just finished Blade Runner, and in the theater next door, The Brady Movie is showing. Three hundred people line up for The Brady Movie, but I will always see Blade Runner, even if only six people see it with me. That's life. I have always considered myself outside of that, not a part of the consumer sheep mentality. I would never trivialize our music just to make more appealing to the masses.

I/F: Front Line Assembly is grommet.

BL: Yeah, we are not looking for compatibility. We try to make it as freaked out or cyberish as we can. It is how we get our kicks in the studio. When we finished the European tour, most of the venues were sold out. We have a solid fan base. People dig us. You would think with the technology being so popular now. Then again there was a backlash from that whole seventies revival.

I/F: Yeah, the guitar gear vs keyboard gear thing. Speaking of gear. What are you using?

BL: Basically the same stuff from *Millennium*. We did use the new EIV sampler and the new Nord keyboard. That was very good, and the Oberheim stuff is real fat. You want big sounds, the Ob's rule the airwaves.

I/F: Is there anyone you are interested in, as far as the scene is concerned?

BL: I have a shit load of CDs right now. Have you heard of the Chemical Brothers?

I/F: Heard of them, but have not heard the CD yet.

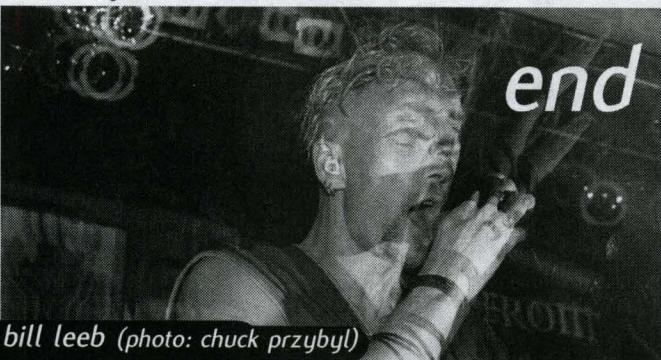
BL: It is pretty good. Left Field. Eat Static. I think that is pretty good. Stuff like that. I haven't heard anything like in the realm of 242, or Puppy or even Neubauten. No one is experimenting with electronics. I think it is because techno is so big, but you know, the problem with techno is that it is fashion music. It doesn't say much, so it doesn't have a long life span. It just feeds the need to dance. I just haven't seen anyone with the "We use technology and we want to be hard and heavy." When we started Puppy, it was like nothing before as far as the image was concerned.

I/F: And right now the equipment is available out there...

BL: Right, but no one seems be out there to take it up for the nineties, you know, no "Band of the Nineties". Most of the people with the equipment are doing ambient techno in their bedrooms. I mean it is cool sounds, but I just don't see anyone out there. I am looking for someone to put out a new view. I find myself listening to ambient techno just to find something weird. I mean it is non-offending, you can play it for your parents. but in six months you can't give those CDs away. Yet *Caustic Grip* still sells a hundred copies a week, world wide. I think that says something.

I/F: Which project is your first love?

BL: I like Front and Delirium. My favorite two. They are completely opposites. Front is very demanding to listen to. It is very in your face, and I like that aspect of it. Delirium is very ambient and in ways it reminds me of Tangerine Dream. Tangerine Dream was very weird and film-like, and I would say that Delirium makes me feel that way. I think I like both, just as much.



bill leeb (photo: chuck przybyl)

alien faktor

The Alien Faktor: big eyes, silver skin, small mouth. vaguely humanoid, but mostly just plain creepy...

Alien Faktor, the band, got its start in 1991 when Tom Muschitz, the main force behind AF started a side project to the band he was in at the time in Madison, Wisconsin. Wanting to get away from the heavy guitars that band relied on, Tom started Alien Faktor. Using mostly dark and minimal soundscapes to use as a base for experimentation, he built a distinct sound that was worthy of the name. A short while later, he had enough material to put out an album. Thinking the music that he was creating at the time to be a bit too on the edge for a larger label to want to pick up and not wanting to take the risk with signing to an indie, Tom started Decibel Records to self-release Alien Faktor's debut, *abduction*. This album, pushed along by constant self-promotion and networking, garnished the band a prominent place among the mass of underground electronic bands that sprung up in the early nineties.

With the response he got from the debut of his own band, Tom went out on a limb and began releasing CDs by other bands that he felt embodied the same dedication to the same aesthetic standards Tom had set for himself. Beginning with Oneiroid Psychosis, who take the dark and creepy element that Alien Faktor possesses and multiplies it by about ten, Decibel set out on a journey as a bona fide independent label. Keeping the releases to under ten per year, including a re-issue of Severed Heads' latest, *gigapus*, Tom has been able to give all the bands on the label the focus they need, but Alien Faktor remains the flagship of the label. With a high standard in both the design of the artwork for the CDs, and for the music inside that is rarely seen in other labels its size, Decibel has since become one of the most respected new indies. With consistently good releases and a label owner who can actually relate to the bands, it's no wonder why. Tom works directly with the bands on Decibel in the studio and they help out on Alien Faktor releases as well. In fact Tom and Lief from Oneiroid Psychosis have worked on an album worth of material together. Tom has co-produced, along with Chris Randall of Sister Machine Gun, a new release for the label by Pain Station, a band that takes off from the more EBM side.

With all the work Tom does with the label, it's hard to imagine how he can possibly be able to still find the time and energy to release as much of his own music as he does. Yet, 1996 alone saw the release of the second album, *desolate*, and a remix album, *final expenses*, including several new mixes by Tom and a new track from the third

album, scheduled for a release this winter! And considering that the music reflects as much dedication to electronic music as the networking that the man does, that is quite an amazing feat.

While earlier Alien Faktor was predominantly experimental, newer material mixes in an even amount of guitars and dance beats. A lot more to latch on to than most bands in the same position as Alien Faktor. A dynamic style has made the band a bit hard to classify and that's exactly the point. The music has been split into two sections; the darker, experimental side and the straight forward, guitar heavy side, going back to what Tom's old band was working with.

While Alien Faktor has been playing shows out recently, Tom fostered the project inside the studio and that experience was crucial to the forming of what the band now is. Playing live has allowed him to hone his vocal skills and, while he feels this would have been an asset early on, the experimentation in the studio was a part of Alien Faktor's history that Tom counts as most important for the band. "A lot of what I write comes out me tinkering around in the studio and I don't think that Alien Faktor would be the same if I did it another way." Agreed.

If Tom had sought out a label to sign Alien Faktor, he would have lost a lot of that ability to "tinker" in the studio. With no regrets, he sees

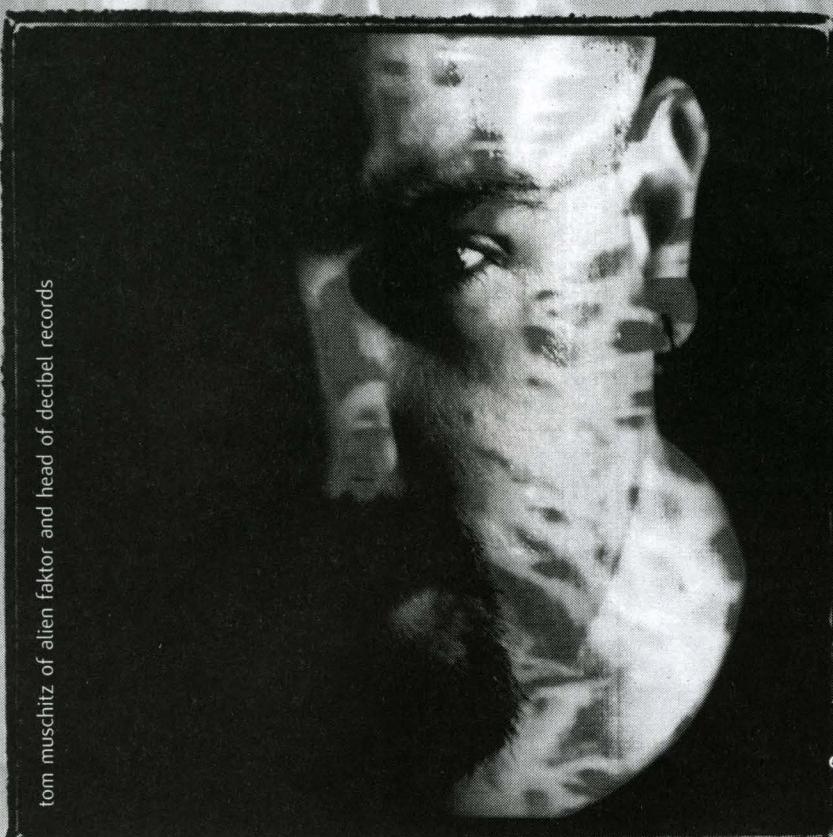
the struggles and frustrations of running an independent label more than rewarding. "I have absolute and total freedom to do whatever I want." Almost every band that gets signed to a major label loses the freedom they are promised, that Tom has guaranteed himself and what he gives to the bands signed to the label.

Coming out of the punk scene and growing into the early industrial and early synth pop, Tom's attitudes toward music has given him an insight into marketing and commercial tactics that, with low prices on mailorder CDs, are, undoubtedly, very in sync with his aesthetic demands.

As a band, Alien Faktor will continue to push edges with dark experimentation and ambient madness. As a label, Decibel will continue to hold fast to its convictions and surpass expectations of an independent label. And as a musician, Tom Muschitz will continue challenge himself with innovative and progressive music. A lot to watch for and a band/label/musician worth watching.

end

tom muschitz of alien faktor and head of decibel records



sheep on drugs

I/F: Being the lead singer for a band calling itself Sheep on Drugs, an obvious reference to raves, what do you think of the techno scene?

D: Not a lot, really. I don't think it's very creative. It's really hard to say. Being in a band, listening to music is ruined. You feel really competitive. You're listening to it as a competitor. I tend to be a bit scathing about other bands, but I don't think they put in enough work. As far as the techno scene goes, in London, there isn't really any kind of a scene. There's jungle music, which we've been using a lot of jungle rhythms, because it means we can get the tracks a lot faster, I think one's up to about 186 BPM. If you have a 4/4 doing that, it can sound a bit ridiculous. If you use the jungle rhythms, you can get quite a groove out of them. Lee programs the hell out of them. It's more like a hip-hop break beat, Lee's really getting into programming them up. I look at the screen and it's just filled up. It's like, "woah, what's going to happen there? That bit looks good already!" And that's just the drum.

I/F: So he doesn't sample beats?

D: Well, he'll sample a break beat and then cut it into individual sections and turn bits around. He really goes into detail.

I/F: A lot of people will just sample a beat, loop it and throw it down.

D: Yeah, and that's what we used to do and that was good and you can layer a few of them. Lee would always put it in his own bass drum and his own snare as well with it. But, now, with this cutting up business, it makes it kind of spastic drums that really do sound good. There's quite a few tracks on the album where the drums and bass are just going mad.

I/F: How did you decide to record with Martin Atkins? Was it because you're on Invisible now?

D: We wrote the album in London and we were trying to record it ourselves, in Leeds. We've got a studio, but it just wasn't big enough. It was taking four days to mix a song where you want to do it in one. We didn't have enough channels and you'd have to ride things carefully. It came out a bit muddy as well. It wasn't sounding crisp enough or hard enough. We had a go and then we were thinking, "Oh, shit, it's not sounding really very good or as good as it should." Invisible was setting up the summer tour and we were going to record in London. They said, "Why don't you come to Chicago to record?" And I thought, "No, we're not leaving London! We're not leaving our engineers!" Then I thought, "Fucking hell, hang on. They just said they'll pay for it and pay for us to come over and Martin Atkins will do it. Hang on, yes, please!"

I/F: So, you work with certain engineers, usually?

D: We've used the same guys from the start. There was a sudden fear of thinking it wouldn't sound like us. Which is mad really. It's been really exciting being over here. They've got the sound just right. It's there anyway, from what we brought, what we wrote. We do so much recording, we've got 24 tracks of digital stuff and we just brought everything with us. Everything that plays. You plug it in and you can't help make it sound like Sheep on Drugs, it just does anyway.

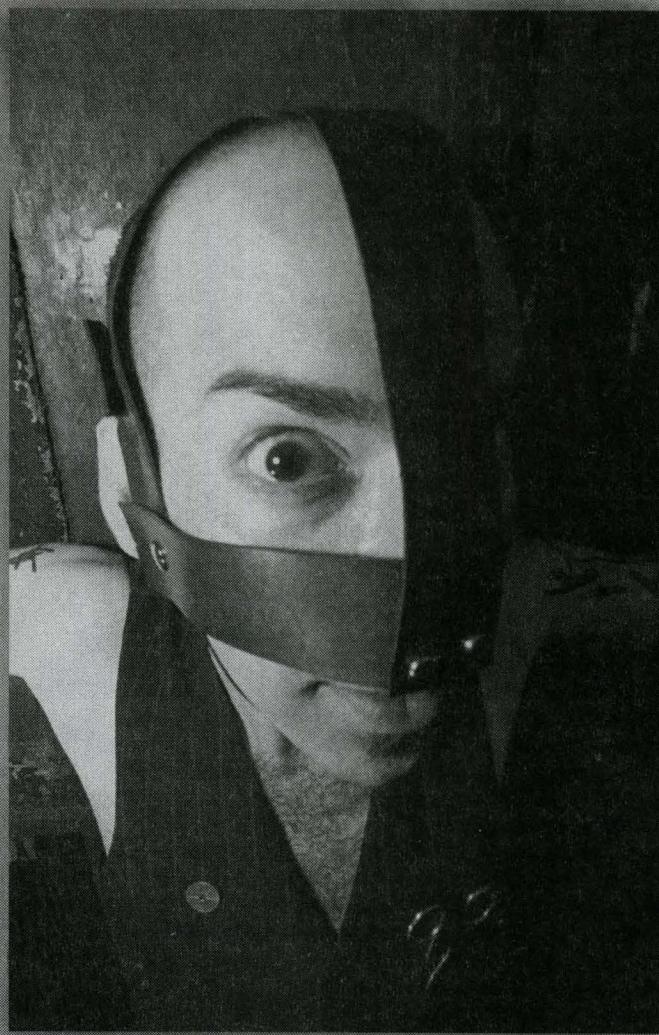
I/F: What kind of equipment are you using?

D: The way Lee works now, he's using loads of drum machines, all Roland stuff. We've got old Roland synths, like the 101 and the 303, 505, 606, 707. The 808 sounds we can get from our Akai samplers. We used to do it all live, so we had these three samplers with an incredible amount of memory.

I/F: Have you ever had more than just you and Lee performing on stage?

D: In the past, we've used a drummer and we've brought a percussionist as well, doing various things. He was standing up and he had a few cymbals and he would be triggering samples. He'd have his own sampler there. But really, at the end of the day, we got them in because we felt like maybe we

felt like we had to have more people on stage and I don't think that now. We dropped them because they were too expensive. Since we got dropped from Island a year ago, we've had to pay for everything ourselves. It's like, "I'm not paying these people." They wouldn't drop their prices or anything, which was a bit shitty. They'd say, "I've got three priority acts I work with and you're one of them," but in the same breath they'd say that they wouldn't drop their fee. So, we thought we should do it without them. I feel very comfortable without them, because I don't ever look behind (me). To me, they've just been an intrusion into the music. They might go out of time a bit and I'm so used to the MIDI timing. It worked live, but now, it doesn't miss it. When you come to see us, the sound is so... there's so much stuff coming out. Me and Lee are doing enough now. Lee's coming forward over



the last couple of years. He's really going for it and that's really taking the heat off of me. I can get back a bit. And it is me and Lee. We make the music, we do the music and it feels right.

I/F: Do you run tape live or do you run sequences?

D: We run ADAT. Everything's prerecorded, but it's mixed live. The kick's always on channel one and the snare's on channel two.

I/F: All that old gear goes out of tune, too.

D: Yeah. And when we came before, we brought the three samplers running with some ridiculous amount of memory. But that gear is studio gear. We saw come down an airplane ramp and drop and hit from about four feet. We broke some buttons or something. We decided that gear was too fragile to go on the road and the ADAT's cheap. They're doing the same thing really. You can get a better sound because you can set the balance on the different channels. Because it's still being mixed live, it will sound different in every venue. John, our engineer, he can cater for the sound system. He's coming over for the tour. He's a necessity, I thought, because he knows our sound live and he knows all the songs and he can help with the monitoring. We've got these big fuck-off speakers from Pigface that we're taking with



us. That way, we'll always have a good sound on stage, no matter what club we're playing in, because we're playing in some quite small clubs. One real frustration for me with gigs is that you've got your monitors facing you and you've got the sound going out. And then you've got the real hardcore fans right up front. They're really in a bad space for hearing the sound. They're not really hearing very much at all. This time, it'll be a wall of sound coming from behind, which I like it really loud on stage. I like it really up. I like it to sound like the records. Then it sounds normal.

I/F: There's been a rumor around about there being a Meat Beat connection with Sheep on Drugs. Is there any truth to that?

D: We played with them once. I think one of our sound engineers used to work for them. That's it.

I/F: Were in doing anything else musically before Sheep on Drugs?

D: I met Lee in 1988. He was in bands before. I hadn't been in bands before, I hadn't really considered it really. Lee had gone away to earn some money. He went to go stay with his folks to earn some money, to get a sampler. I met these people who had these two big houses they were getting off of the local counsel, it was called a housing cooperative. The local counsel gives you a house for 6 years. And you just pay very minimal rent and I thought that's excellent. I wanted to get away from the scene I was in, I was living with these people and we were all junkies and it was very bad. It had all kind of come to a horrible, messy end. I needed somewhere to go, I needed to get out of that scene. I met these people and I moved in. Just after a couple of months of moving in, Lee came back. I saw this bloke walking down the road and I thought, "he's going to our house." Within two weeks, we'd started Sheep on Drugs. Before he actually bought the sampler, we had the idea. The idea sprung from listening to acid house music. The early acid house music that came out of Chicago and Detroit. We were hearing that in '88. We had this idea of, "oh, what's it going to become?"

This new music. It was just blips and stuff. Music made out of noises. Lee had always been into. He had fiddled around with samplers for years. He's bought a little Casio thing in like 1984 I think he first used samples. He's played every instrument in a band. He's sung, played guitar, played bass, he can drum.

I/F: In different bands?

D: Kind of in the same band. He's just changed the line-up all the time! He's been making music since he was 14. Sort of seriously making demos and tapes, though it was all really weird. So, suddenly it just really clicked and we had this idea. Acid house started kicking in and it sounded brilliant. It was like, "wow, this is really new music." It really was different. I was never into disco when I was a kid. I was into the punk side, or new wave. With disco, a couple of songs were ok, but I never liked dancing to disco. I was never into that. Suddenly, acid house came along and it made white boy dance, basically! It really did sweep England. Dramatically, it had a big effect. We thought, "What's it going to be like? Who's making this stuff? Would you do it on stage?" Our ideas really spun off. I can't understand why there aren't more bands like us. We're basically just two guys, making electronic music, which is a very standard format. It went all through the eighties. Yet, we're always using cutting edge music like techno or jungle breaks or whatever, just the most modern things. We listen to pirate radio stations and they play some exciting stuff. It gets boring after a while, but it's always good to imagine, "god, that's just crazy music!" Like when jungle came out. Just imaging, who makes it, what do they look like. And we've always just gone on that kind of basis, so it's always been disappointing to see people or to go see them. I remember playing with the Aphex Twin. And you couldn't even see him. He just had this bank of synths around him and he didn't do anything. And we played with Orbital as well. I went to go see them really early on in about 1989 and it was quite exciting, because they were really moving around. They were basically just mixing stuff live, and live sequencing. I remember thinking, "that's ok, it's just not doing it for me." I thought it was good, but I couldn't see what everyone was getting so fired up about. We played with them a couple of years later and they had, in a way, became even more boring. Kind of like they got comfortable with not doing very much on stage. For me, I'd feel really stupid just standing still. I be thinking that I ought to be doing something, surely!

I/F: People paid to get in...

D: Exactly! That's the main thing, people paid money to get in, for t-shirts, for records. I think you just ought to give them a little bit more.

I/F: Even Kraftwerk had a lot of stuff going on stage.

D: Yeah, they did some really mad things. I just think that you've got to give everything that you've got. Come up with an angle that's your own, really. I hate to do a shitty show. I hate to be thought of as shitty or not very good. I don't mind if people don't like us or don't like our music, but I hate it when people think or if you get a review that makes it out to be like you're not really doing anything. At least something. People might hate us, but at least they hate us with a vengeance.

end



intelligent homes

Mobile Computing

Apple (www.info.apple.com) has released its first PowerBook with a built-in CD-ROM drive after several years of the option being already being available on PC models, most notably those made by Toshiba. While PowerBooks have had HD130 SCSI ports for a while, never was an internal CD-ROM drive available. The PowerBook 1400 features a quad speed internal CD-ROM, an active matrix color screen and a standard x megs of RAM. After that mess with the 5300's and the 190's (recalls on both), let's hope these stay together. Before the 1400, the only other PB available that was both in stock AND not on recall, was the Duo 2300, which requires the upgrade of the Duodock to accommodate its thicker casing.

Input Devices

Logitech (www.logitech.com) now has a trackball in a design I've often admired, but with a construction I can finally feel comfortable using. The Trackman Marble, available both for Windows and Mac, features a thumb tracking ball, designed with the human hand in mind. While the hand rests in a natural position, palm down, the thumb tracks the ball, while three programmable buttons lie comfortably under the fingertips. The only problem I have is with the tracking software. The settings are either not sensitive enough or too sensitive. A more broad range of tracking options would have been nice. The ball has no mechanical working parts, which was one of the downsides of other trackballs. When the ball gets dirty from normal use, the mechanics of the rollers would decrease in sensitivity. With a tracking laser, the ball has a better chance of keeping its functionality.

Kid's Toys

Kids toys have always been annoying. I empathize with parents everytime a new annoying "with built-in sound effects" toy comes out. But damnit, some of those little noise makers are really cool. The MegaMouth 'toons is small hand held, collapsible megaphone device with, you guessed it, BUILT-IN SOUND EFFECTS! Not since those little guitars and keyboards with sampled riffs have I had so much excitement. With effects for various stages in a cartoon (dynamite, spring, zipper zipping, etc.), you, I mean kids, can create their own little cartoons. Let's hope most of them realize that when a bomb goes off in someone's face in real life, they really die, not just get covered in soot.

Gaming

For the same price of the Sony Playstation, the Nintendo 64 may just be the hottest game system around, if it weren't for two small things. First of all, Playstation games come on CD. That means stereo sound and music with lots of game play. Nintendo 64 is still cartridge based. Secondly, Playstation has a ton of games and Nintendo 64, well, doesn't. BUT, the games that are out there for it, most notably the new Mario 64, kick some serious 32-bit ass. You can't compare 64-bit graphics and processing to either Playstation or Saturn. Nintendo 64 wins everytime. Now if only there were about, oh, a hundred more games for it...

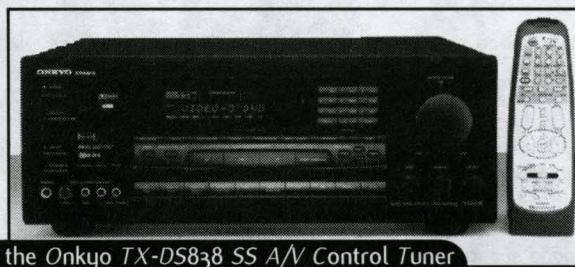
While we're on the topic of games, in the computer game department, the amazing Quake (*id Software*) is in processing of being ported to Mac by Lion Software. Currently this very popular game, which features music and sound effects by Trent Reznor, is only available for the Windoze platform. Despite the facts that Lion has done other *id* games (Doom II) and that Lion is claiming the *id* code was very clean and will be easy to port, the expected street date for MacQuake as reported by NextGeneration magazine isn't until March of 1997! That is ridiculous.

Storage Devices

Storage space has become a major concern among computer users, especially those who do a lot of graphics and music. The choices for most users are between Iomega's ZIP™ drive, a 100 meg per removable disk drive and Syquest's EZ-136 drive, which adds 35 more megs to the pot. And now, Iomega has made the decision even tougher with their new Jaz™ drive, a one gig removable. What it really depends on is how you're going to use the drive. Are you going to just be using it as a backup drive? Or will you be sharing large files with other users? Or will it serve as your second hard drive? If you are shipping your disks, you may want to consider the Zip drive, who's \$20 per 100 meg disc are very sturdy without a lot of loose fitting parts. I've never felt uncomfortable moving any Syquest compatible too much because the way they rattle and EZ disks are no exception. The increased storage for proportional increase in price may be worth it for simple home-use storage though. If you've just purchased a new computer, chances are that you've got at least a gig drive in there and I would recommend the additional investment in the Jaz drive. At only about twice the cost of the Zip drive, it has 10 times the storage capacity with additional disks running around a \$100. As with any hardware purchase, shop around, talk to people who own the drives and get the best deal you can.

Home Theatre

The heat over new and better systems seems to be getting worse everyday with lots of companies promising major revolutionary advancements in how we can mindlessly sedate ourselves with the crap they pump out over the air waves (or digital satellites). Whatever expensive, and no doubt incredible sounding, system you put together, there are plenty of options out there, with some companies offering a complete package minus the comfy couch and irritatingly happy family (which, if needed, could be rented, the couch that is). Onkyo offers one of the more reliably high quality systems for personal home theater, with their flagship model, the PTS-707 with a SRP set at \$800. This is an all in one unit designed expressly for the purpose of pumping out amazing sound at a low price. Onkyo also offers a full line of high end home theater and stereo electronics.



the Onkyo TX-DS838 SS A/V Control Tuner Amplifier, list price \$1500

Home Automation

Truly intelligent homes, well at least obedient ones, are available now. Mousehouse (SRP \$69), a software package available for Macintosh, is the newest product in the X-10 home automation industry. With programmable X-10 compatible devices and modules, you can set up your home with lighting and power-on sequences for both safety and convenience. These devices can be programmed to turn lights on and even adjust the heating or arm the security system in multiple configurations. Each day of the week can have different macros, with specific or random sequences. By programming X-10 devices through the existing 120V current in your home, you can set up one computer (they even have a version for the Plus or SE), a programming device, 5 or 6 modules (including ones from X-10 Pro for wall-mounted light switches and even stereos and tv's), you can have automation in your home for under \$500, computer included! The X-10 standard has been available for years, but is now just catching on.

end

steve roach

Steve Roach, the musician known for his work with Fathom Records, a sub-label of dark ambient and space music label, Hearts of Space, is one of those rare people who can be extremely in touch with his spirituality, but, not feel that the use of technology, or even it's very existence, is a demon. Quite the opposite, it seems, because of the amount that Roach has utilized electronics in the quest for his sound. He feels the instruments are merely the tools. "The intent of the music is the point," explains Roach. "The instruments, the technology are just the tools to create an opening from this world to some other world that's right on the other side. The sound is already there. We are able to, in different ways with these instruments, to tune into that, extract from that and shape it into a place that hopefully feeds your soul." Whatever instrument Roach may choose, be they rocks or the newest sampler or synthesizer. "It all disappears in the creative process."

By incorporating this amount of new world technology into his process, Roach attempts to create a balance between the seemingly dissimilar vibe between electronic music and what has become popularly known as world music. But when one looks back to the musicians from the time before the word "microchip" was invented, those who created music thousands of years before western civilizations even existed, their goals were to transcend and reach a state of heightened awareness through the music. Roach's motive's have always been similar. "When I first started doing music, synthesizers were like

surgical tools. I could go into the brain and unlock certain things that you couldn't normally access. It was like psychedelics, but they [the chemical psychedelics] didn't last long enough; no more than several hours. As much as I could, I would try to live in sound worlds, which would last more than the length of a psychedelic experience. The places I go through music are more profound than any drug experience, more than any trip." Early on, Roach synthesized the relationship between the electronics and our nervous system. A synth purist in the beginning, Roach now feels that his whole body is plugged in and allows the use of a wide range of musical instruments from around the world. His quest is finding the movement, the current that, as he says, "is equally flowing through all the different instruments." They all have some kind of different frequencies, some sense of time that they hold. Unleashing that time and blending it in with modern instrumentation is the end result.

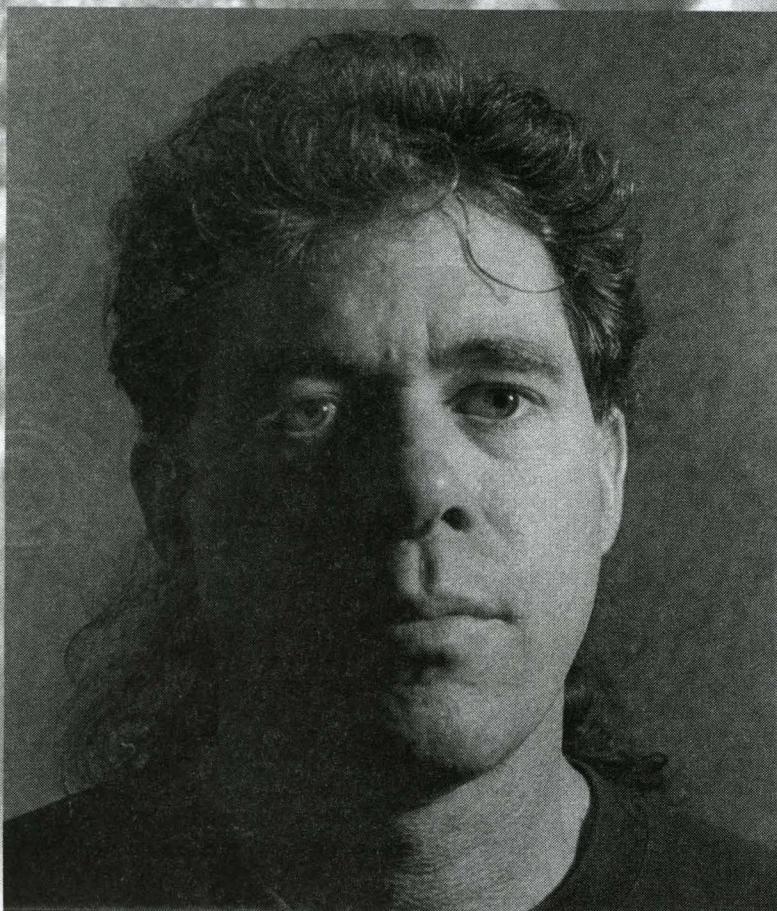
The deserts of the southwestern United States where Roach calls home, plays an important role in the development of this process and in the experience. A world-class mountain biker, he uses the open space to ride and focus inwardly on his spirit. In no way does Roach feel he could have made the music he has without the desert. Ever since he was a kid, he would wander through the desert in a half trance. But when he spent 12 years in LA before rejoining the desert, he had to practically force out any music. It was nearly impossible for him to create a sanctuary in this concrete jungle. So Roach worked late at night,

when it was quieter and he could find as much peace as he could. After realizing that there was only so much that he could do in that environment, and that where you create your music is just as important as how you make it, he made the move back to the desert.

To Roach, making music is expressing something that's burning deep inside of any musician and whatever frequency that is, is each individual's preference. There is no limitation to particular subcultures, people from all areas, from all ages and areas of interests can become familiar to this kind of feeling that they can have in music. People in Australia, Spain, Belgium, people all over the world have this basic understanding of music. It's tribal in the sense of gathering like minded people together and meeting other people already at a certain places of understanding through music. It breaks barriers. The fact that Roach's music is instrumental, and has no need for linguistic translation assists in that.

And finally, when Roach describes his experiences with early electronic instruments and putting on shows, you can still feel the child-like excitement:

"You would get to the venue and have to set the equipment up. It was like an experiment that would go off in about an hour. I had a lot of synths that, before MIDI, you would clock them together with voltage control. So, you would have two 16 step sequencers triggering the Mini-Moog or the Micro-Moog or the 2600. At the time I had friends at Oberheim and Sequential Circuits that went on to design these units, so, I had the luxury of getting a lot of the prototypes and growing up with technology. Nineteen (years old) was when I really started jumping into the whole electronic music field. At that point there were no programmable synths and there was no MIDI and there were no samplers. Now, we have all this stuff at our disposal."



STEVE ROACH

end

ministry

Paul Barker is the illustrious, and thus far silent, partner of the infamous singer and mouthpiece for Ministry, Al Jourgensen. Barker is an enigma when compared to the answered-question and open-book lifestyle of his partner, Jourgensen. Little has been said of this talented musician, whose work includes a solo-project, Lead Into Gold, as well as all of the other projects the Ministry team has been known for (Pailhead, Lard, Revolting Cocks, 1000 Homo DJs, to name just a few). There is much more to Paul Barker, and his role is much bigger than most would assume.

I/F: What were the circumstances involved around you hooking up with Al?

PB: I started working with Al in '86 after the Twitch record came out and he wanted to get a band together. I had met Al in '82 or '83 in Boston; I was living there with a band that I played in, and Al was there working on the Arista era of Ministry. We met, and so on and so forth. We both left Boston and stayed in touch. Eventually, I wanted to help him get a band together, to help tour with Ministry for the Twitch record. We did that; and we hit it off. And the complete band that we had at that time went into the studio and started working. We found out that we could work together.

I/F: Was that when the Blackouts broke up?

PB: Yes.

I/F: And you brought Bill with you?

PB: Bill Rieflin? Yeah, absolutely.

I/F: There is an obvious jump in style between Twitch and The Land of Rape and Honey. Is that where Al was at musically or was that your input that got that...

PB: Well, it's a little bizarre. I can't say that I'm solely responsible for Al's change - fuck that. Nor can I say it would be the same if I wasn't there. But I don't know; we don't know anything different. I mean in this probability that we live, we don't know any different. Yeah sure, Al and I bounced a lot of ideas off of each other at the time; and perhaps my enthusiasm helped drive that record and helped make it sound the way that it did. I mean, for me, from the Blackouts, where there was zero use of technology, to working with Al, it was really a lot of fun. All of the sudden I was playing around with things, and working with Al, and working with samplers and sequencers and shit. And yeah, I think my enthusiasm had a lot to do with the finished product.

I/F: In the studio, was it mostly you and Al doing the writing? Starting with The Land of Rape and Honey, there has been a lengthy list of musicians. Was it mainly you and Al doing the core songwriting and bringing other people in for certain parts, like Chris Connelly...

PB: Yeah. As a blanket statement, yes. But, there are exceptions to it. There are some songs that were band-written songs and some would be with Bill, Al, and I. Actually, a lot of material was written that way. So, 'yes' would be the answer.

I/F: How did you manage your time with all the side projects?

PB: I think the last time that we really had an opportunity to turn out shit like that was before Psalm 69, when we were involved in all kinds of shit. We were living in the studio and inviting people over to record. Since then, it has changed - our primary focus is Ministry. We did the Linger Ficken Good record, but I really don't have the time now. I have a family with two kids; I want to devote time to them. All the extracurricular stuff, which is important, is on the back burner. Although I see in the future, when we get off of tour here, I will have time. My kids are a little older now, so I will be able to devote more time to - I don't know - being a monk.

I/F: I remember that when Psalm 69 came out, there was news of a new Lard album, a new 1,000 Homo DJ's, or even a new Lead Into Gold coming out. So, were the side projects between Psalm 69 and Filth Pig put on the back burner because of the strife you had in Texas?

PB: Yeah. Like I mentioned, Ministry became our primary focus. When we finished the Linger Ficken Good album in May of '93, Al and I decided that we wanted to move out of town, to Texas. You know, the grass is always greener... So, that summer, I went down to scout out some property, and Al came down there in November or December, and we started working. All of the sudden, '93 is gone. [In] '94, we started working on new material for this record and we wanted to still find some studio equipment because we wanted to get our own place together, to record our own record - everyone's fucking dream; every rock musician's dream. Well, you know, some dreams get shattered. The problem is that we also played some dates a year ago. We went to Japan and Australia a year ago, and that was in the middle of trying to finish the record, and there was lots of stress. One thing led to another, and where'd the time go?

paul barker

I/F: And then all of the sudden - here is the new album.

PB: It's ninety-fucking-six. It's gross and pitiful, and I am really angry about that. But, life goes on. The only thing I can say about that is that I really want to be able to do more music. That's another thing: something that really grossed me out about that aspect is that I realized that the last record was Psalm 69 in the summer of '92, and this record will come out in the winter of '96. If I was in high school, I wouldn't give a shit about this band anymore. If I was a junior in '92, I would have graduated and gone on to college by the time this album came out. God, that is so lame. I remember when I was a kid, I wanted the next fucking Alice Cooper record. I awaited the next Black Sabbath record...that was a yearly thing. Unfortunately today, that is not possible. It's not possible, if you are a popular band, [to get albums out regularly] and go out on the road for a year.

I/F: The big perception is that between '89 and '92, you had so many albums come out, then *Filth Pig* comes out - and it's a live album. Ministry are the pioneers. It's a shock to go from being the electro pioneers to throwing everything out.

PB: For us, it is strange. We are still totally fascinated with machines, and the music that you can make with them. We felt that the chore of getting *Psalm 69* finished was so great that we didn't want to go down that alley again; it's really a blind alley. If you pay attention to this shit called 'industrial music,' it's all basically the same. There are only so many things that you can do in that style. It has developed itself into a corner. We wanted to completely get away from that. We wanted to give people a record that they would have no idea where it was coming from. We were really happy about that. It was like, this song is going to have a mandolin on it; that is really going to freak people out. That was all intentional. First and foremost, we want to challenge ourselves. We think that our fans are intelligent enough to want to go with us. We don't want to spoon-feed people. And at the same time, [we] don't take ourselves too seriously.

I/F: I think that is something that a lot of people have always admired.

PB: That's good! I am glad to hear that. As a creative individual, you have to be honest with yourself. We are really funny guys. We're assholes like everybody. Sometimes you're nice, sometimes you're not.

I/F: I am from Chicago. I have heard the rumors.

(laughter)

And they are taken as such!

PB: Yeah, sure. We are old enough, and we have been doing it long enough on our own, that we know that the bottom line is that we have to satisfy ourselves. We are thrilled that we have such a large fanbase that we can maintain a livelihood as a result of our music. We're giddy when we think about that - we are juvenile delinquents, AND we have a life.

I/F: This may be something that you don't want to talk about yet, but how do you feel about Jim Nash's death and the scene evolving into something different.

PB: I am not sure what you are getting at, specifically. Are you talking about the style of music that the label has, or the fact that the label had slash-and-burn tactics because it was too top heavy and had too many releases?

I/F: I guess I'm asking about your feelings about how Wax Trax! and Ministry were the focus of a world-wide scene here in Chicago, and now things have changed.

PB: That has changed, yeah. But, life is about change. You can't maintain things forever. That is what's really strange to me - some people are really disappointed in this record for whatever [reasons]. We are not banner carriers in the vanguard of this style. You change; you want to do different things. Change is what life is all about. If nothing changed, there would be no life. I am very grieved at Jim Nash's passing. The label is in a pretty healthy state now. They have a couple of acts that are selling records, and that is cool.

I/F: His passing marked another passing.

PB: Yes it did, didn't it? I want to say that the label is in capable hands, but I don't know what the fuck I am talking about. Whatever... I don't live in the past.

end

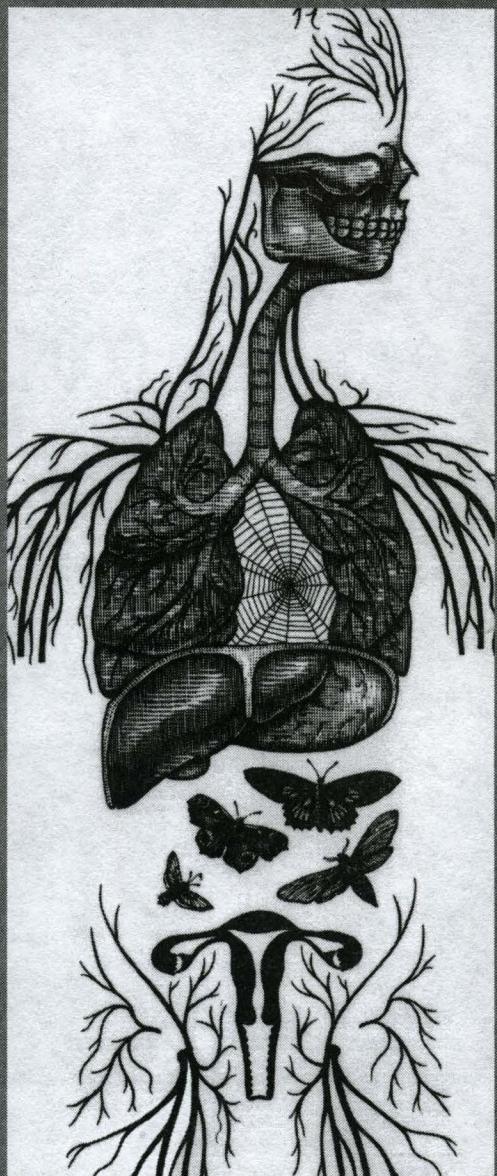


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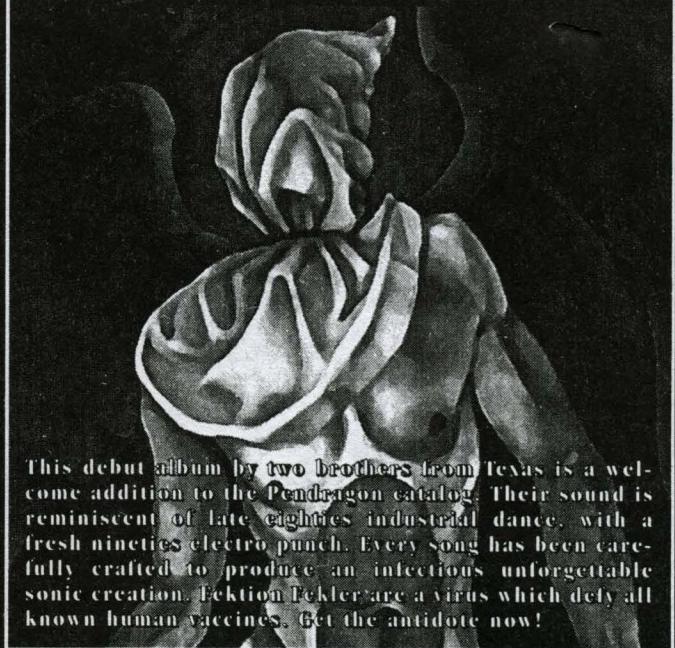


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29Died
Sworn
Orchard/Prospect Music
The newest band to come out of the super hot SoCal electro-scene, 29Died has given us a surprisingly professional release from a new-comer. Sworn has a lot of what the big boys pack, even a remix by Bigod 20! Produced by Mitch Sigman of Minus Sign, another LA band, Sworn is really a great album. From hard dance tracks to guitar fueled post-industrial, Sworn is a good listen, even if there really isn't anything new being presented. There's a lot of what we've seen before (cyberpunk samples, screaming vox, etc.), but 29Died do it well enough to forgive them. Anyone into bands like *Insight 23* and *Idiot Stare* (other LA electronic bands) as well as bands like Chemlab, definitely need to pick this up. One thing, though; do we really another cover of "Tainted Love?" [anon_devi]

(Orchard/Prospect Music, 41-B Duesenberg Drive Thousand Oaks, CA 91362 USA)



Alien Faktor
Final Expenses
Decibel Records
Alien Faktor's third release, *Final Expenses*, is a remix album that comes short on the heels of a new album and as a precursor to the second another new full length in under a year, the third for this Wisconsin group. Featuring remixes by the usual; Hate Dept., Spahn Ranch, Apparatus and a few label mates, *Final Expenses* serves as a great look into this band that has been bordering on recognition for a couple of years. Worth checking out simply because it is a rarity among the new releases with its mass of dynamics and variation between tracks. Riding the fence between dark experimental and guitar heavy ebm, Alien Faktor really should be a lot bigger than they are, and with the amount of CDs that Tom and company release, that may just happen quite soon. [Andy Waggoner]

(Decibel Records, 17125 W. Bluemont Rd., #122, Brookfield, WI 53008 USA)



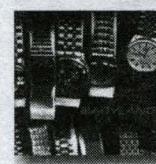
Alien Sex Fiend
The Singles 1983-1995
Anagram Records
Not only does this release provide a CD collection of certain remixes that were previously only available scattered across many different singles, it also marks a turning point in the career of Nik and Mrs. Fiend. This is the final Alien Sex Fiend release on Anagram

records now that they have left and formed their own label, 13th Moon Records. This collection of singles conveniently fits onto two discs and does a thorough job of covering ALL of the songs that have made them so loveable these past thirteen years. For those who may be unfamiliar, the musical stylings of this collection cover their early work that had a slight punk influence, such as "New Christian Music" and "R.I.P.", all the way through their more recent ambient works like "Inferno." The only sad thing is that other slightly unknown b-sides such as "Mrs. Fiend Goes to Outer Space," "Gurl at the End of My Gun," and selections from the "Dynamic Duo" 12" were neglected. For what it's worth, this is another release that celebrates a band that has not gotten the recognition that they deserve over the years, and it gives many people a chance to find out what they may have been missing. [Dave Henderson]



Attrition
3 Arms and a Dead Cert
Hyperium Records
Attrition has been combining classical and darkwave styles for quite a while now, but I think that this is the first time that they have brought in a live cello player. The result is stunning. Dense and dynamic, 3 arms... shows that Attrition are one of the leading bands in the darkwave movement. They have a minimal sound, while still showing a full breadth of styles. The one main complaint that I do have is that, while it's nice to have complimenting male and female vocalists, the female vocalist really doesn't measure up to the music. At times, it all works splendidly, but at other times, her voice is so off that it's grating. And Martin Bowe's voice is little more than a growl. The electronic beats and synth undertones are stylized and sexy, and the cello really is nice, but it falls just short of being really great. Still, Attrition, especially on this album, are truly original and quite good. [David Sexton]

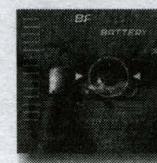
(Hyperium Records, P.O. BOX 100561, 9115 Lauf Germany; Darkwave Distribution, P.O. Box 166155, Chicago, IL 60616 USA)



Babyland
Who's Sorry Now?
Flipside Records
In my own humble opinion, Babyland is what true industrial music is all about: They beat on things and misuse power tools. This is Volume 3 in Babyland's series of "Noise and Misinformation," and includes nine conventional audio tracks plus three MPEG format videos for use with both Macintosh and Windows operating systems... or so the CD cover says. I

couldn't get any of the videos to work at all; I couldn't even get the audio tracks to play on my computer at first. After some tweaking, all was well with the audio portion, but it would have been nice to see what kind of videos these guys came up with for "He Will Not Forgive," "Worst Case Scenario" and "Dismissal." Aside from that minor setback, this disk is all good. "Lukewarm" opens with a deep ominous, synth line that continues growling away as clamorous, almost "tribal" beats are layered on top, followed by a blipping synth loop and finally Dan's raw, resentful vocals. "A Slow News Day" is perhaps the most infectious, yet simplest song on the disk. The listener is led in by a buzzing synth loop that bounces round and round, gradually increasing in speed until it levels off at a point where it's practically impossible to listen to it without bouncing around yourself. Nearing the end, it slows back down, dropping you gently on your head. In "Happy Drum," they opt for actual singing over accusational outbursts for the most part. It actually seems the happy little song — that is, until you reach the end and Dan screams "Then I mess it up! Then I screw it up!" There's an undeniable hip-hop feel in "He Will Not Forgive," from the synth-bassline and percussion to the vocal style and other instrumentation. "The Door Northern" is my favorite track on this album; a dark, haunting piece, featuring eerie vocal effects and background samples. "Cancer Beat" is what I can only describe as a well-structured, repetitive noise collage. The disk ends with "Begin Again," the first three minutes of which is an upbeat, dancy number. This is followed by several minutes of spooky, bell-like synth tones wavering up and down, eventually growing louder and louder until suddenly... nothing. [Veronica Kirchoff]

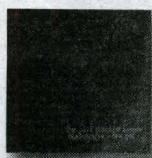
(Flipside, P.O. Box 60790, Pasadena, CA 91106 USA, email: flip-side@ix.netcom.com)



Battery
Distance
C.O.P. International
While this is probably the best Battery album yet, it still falls just short of being a really, truly memorable album or one that is worth keeping in personal heavy rotation. Fans of Battery, who are the premier indie electro band with dominant female vocals, will find this to be a welcome addition to Battery's discography, but for the average listener, it might be a hard sell. Maria's vocals are still a bit immature and are off-key as much as they are on and the music is still fairly disjointed, becoming cluttered on occasion. After this many albums, this has simply become Battery's distinctive sound, but may be for reserved for the patriots of indie scene. Distance is

well produced and has a dynamic range most bands dream of achieving, but it's not interesting enough to really keep a picky listener's interest for too long. By this, the third or fourth release by Battery, I would expect that they should put out an album full of great cuts. Instead we get two or three really good songs while the rest are only mediocre. There's lots of potential on Distance and live, Battery carry off their electronic edge very well, so I'm not writing them off by any means. I guess the reason I'm being so hard is that my expectations are high for people this talented. They will come up with an amazing album, I'm sure, but it may be a bit to travel to get there. I think they will have to leave behind some elements that they seem to cherish so much and fine tune their sound. What they need is a producer who can help them weed out what is and isn't working, because there is plenty that works, such as the deep synths and a handful of the melodies. Some of the rhythms, electronic and harsh that they are, work wonderfully, but at times they seem more for effect than anything else. As they focus a bit more on what works and find a sound that suits their talents, I think it'll all work out. [Andy Waggoner]

(C.O.P. International, 981 Aileen Street, Oakland, CA 94608 USA)



black tape for a blue girl
the first pain to linger
BOOK/MAXI CD
Projekt Records
Upon opening the beautifully bound 92 page paperback, *The First Pain To Linger*, I noticed the unique format. There are no chapters per se, but sections, as if you're following author Sam Rosenthal's thought patterns. The book begins awkwardly, not badly, rather like the sudden influx of a dream you're trying to remember. Upon the third page I found myself engrossed, soaking up the very personal experiences that might as well have been written with tears. The passion of this man is all here, with no apologies or shame, and takes you from a euphoric state of love between a man and a woman to the crushing pain of seeing it slip away, and to every state in between.

Seemingly compiled of letters and journal pages linked by memories both vague and bright, the book relies on an honesty rarely shown by autobiographical authors. The accompanying MAXI CD contains two previously unreleased tracks, "forbidden" and "7" as well as 4 rare tracks only released in Europe on various compilations. "forbidden," my favorite track, reveals the most somber side of this band that I've ever heard, combining haunting vocals (Oscar Herrera and Lucian Cassiel) with Sam Rosenthal's electronic requiem. "the glass is shattered" is less heavy-handed in its sorrow, but still bittersweet and according to Rosenthal's liner notes, 'focuses on the feminine perspective' of tragedy. "pandora's dream" (original version released on a chaos of desire) enters a completely different realm with Rosenthal's original vocals angelically replaced by Lucian. "overwhelmed, beneath me" is a version featuring Ryan Lum of Love Spirals Downwards on guitar. The vocals on this version are also different in that there are not wordless like the original, bringing a new dimension to the song. "i no longer remember the feelings" is actually two songs ("we exist entwined" and "the flow of our spirit") combined for a per-

formance piece in early 92. The first half is a vaguely ethnic, minor key piece with breathy male vocals that flow into the second half consisting of Sam's whispered spoken-word over and under various layers of sound. "a good omen" takes the vocals from a previous release ("the flow of our spirit") and reinterprets it with new sonic textures, more suitable as a soundtrack to something (the book, presumably) than anything else. The final track "7" was written by Sam 'in a very somber mood' during the Gulf War. This track also works well as background music but is unfortunately not otherwise outstanding. *The First Pain To Linger* is a must have not only for fans of black tape, but for anyone that would immerse themselves in the raw experience of delight and anguish of its author. And I'm not ashamed to admit that it made me cry. Twice. [Maledicti]

(Projekt Records, P.O. Box 166-155, Chicago, IL 60616 USA, email: question@projekt.com)



C17HgNO₃
Terra Damnata
Fifth Column Records
John Bergin's side-project from Trust Obey has been C17HgNO₃ for the past few years while he waited the

release of *Hands of Ash*. dark and demonic, but with simple comic book sensibilities. Very much like Bergin's *From Inside* graphic novel in mood and delivery. Floating between the worlds of theatrical and truly twisted, Bergin tells the story of the darkest corners of his soul with slow, somber movements and thunderous intensity. C17 is what fellow reviewer for *Interface*, Dave Henderson, has called "Drama music." Very similar to offerings from the Cold Meat Industry label, with the richness of styles and intensity. The mood created by C17 and other Drama musicians is one more suitable in a demented Wagner opera than from an independent band. Music for scaring the shit out of young children. [anon_devi]

(Fifth Column Records, P.O. Box 787, Ben Franklin Station, Washington D.C. 20044 USA)



Collide
Beneath the Skin
Re-Constriction Records
This male/female duo is the epitome of diametric balance, and while the name Collide evokes images of car crashes

and other disasters, rest assured that the music of Collide does no such thing. The soundscapes Statik has created are everything electro-dance-industrial should be: complex, progressive and compelling without being overwhelming. kARIN's vocals ring out like angelic bells, and are often treated as another instrument in Statik's arsenal, effected and sampled, adding yet another facet to the polished, perfected gem that is Collide. [Veronica Kirchoff]

(Re-Constriction, 4901-906 Morena Blvd., San Diego, CA 92117-3432, email: chase@panhandler.com)



Cubanate
Barbarossa
Dynamica Records
The third album from Cubanate comes on the heels of a fairly successful tour through America this spring (translation: it actually happened) and on the cusp of another with Acumen. What began as a fusion of guitars with techno (not just technology manufactured, but in the genre "techno") has mutated into a cross-over metal/electro outfit geared mainly toward angst ridden boys. Hard and fast, but still danceable, *Barbarossa* kicks pretty hard and doesn't let up ever. Don't expect Synthpop or retro dance music, but screaming, distorted vocals, hard beats and pummeling guitars. Definitely a step-up in the quality scale from "Bodyburn," while still retaining most of what made that such a great dance hit. This may find Cubanate finally stealing FLA's coveted ranking as top cyber band, except that Cubanate don't rely on SciFi movies as a jumping ground. Regardless, this album is a worthy opponent to *HardWired* and might even be a bit more exciting, simply because it is from a band so new. Recommended. [Andy Waggoner]

(Dynamica Records c/o Noise Records, 292 S. La Cie Nega Blvd. suite 103, Los Angeles, CA 90211 USA)



Death and Horror Inc.
Bitter Alloys and Pressures Collide
Van Richter Records
This is actually an American licensing of DHI's 1994 release, *Pressures Collide*, and that

album's preceding MCD, *Bitter Alloys* (both on Fringe, Canada). Those releases were definite disappointments at the time, and they're certainly not getting better with age. The vocals are dry and weak, and there's a lot of half-assed blatant metal guitar. The mix is hollow, but at the same time, crowded. The whole lot of it just plain misses its mark. This Canadian trio (with additional guitars by Mike Gibbs, of the atrocious sleaze-metal band Dogpile) have definite potential. They showed a lot of promise with their early material, but now they're just a below average crossover band. Perhaps some new material will yield a different end. [Sage]

(Van Richter Records, 100 S. Sunrise Way Ste. 219, Palm Springs, CA 92262 USA)



Dilate
Cyclos
Cleopatra Records
Dilate is precisely what you'd expect from the album cover; droning synth waves and washes with an eerie effect.

Fairly simple space ambient with minimal musings. There is very little difference between songs on Cyclos, just warm washes of sound that float into each other. I wouldn't recommend this as a starting point to get into ambient, nor if what you crave are traditional songs with verses and choruses and all that other stuff that comes with traditional rock music, but I would recommend this for anyone looking for quality atmospheric and background music. Simple and dark, but staying clear of what

has been pegged "dark ambient" or "experimental." Nowhere near the best output by an ambient artist and may even sink into the growing pile of "bedroom ambient" CDs. [anon_devi]

(Cleopatra Records, 8726 S. Sepulveda ste D-82, Los Angeles, CA 90045 USA)

embryoptic
blood vessels
connect the dots music

Techno-ambient music from Alaska? A fitting environment for chill music, wouldn't you say? As chilling and hallucinogenic as John Carpenter's Thing, blood vessels delivers on the minimal ambient. With an intense fusion of thick synths and percussion, blood vessels is like a syringe full of ice water, running through veins with precision and dementia. Subtle beats, poignant and worthy, drive intermittently synthetic diversion and the spatial enhancing sound collages of waveforms and modulation. Excellent and intelligent. [anon_devi]



Etnica
Alien Protein
Blue Room Released

The rise of intelligent music through science and technology hails the universe of the unknown. Amidst the acid riffs

and the brilliant flashes of high powered lights, there exists the obsidian shrine. It is this monolith that bears presence of alien intelligence and influence. Etnica fully embraces this super-terrestrial phenomena, bearing intercourse found in acoustic signal patterns. One might recognize these audible transmissions as pounding beats fixed and layered atop manic synth lines. Reported at 140 [average] bpm, Alien Protein is a club oriented album ready to feed the vibe. Although Alien Protein creates a powerful, energized groove, the music itself is trapped within uninventive transitions relying almost completely on crash cymbals [for virtually every song, mind you], while sounds are fairly bland, seemingly derived from mundane factory presets. Though not disastrous to its effectiveness, this decision adds unnecessary repetition for the sake of album cohesion. Quite sparse on samples, Etnica focuses rather on the binding melody, that continuously active pattern which endlessly feeds upon itself into a near frenzy. Had Etnica integrated a few samples and effects, Alien Protein might well have created the theatrics to couple the raw intensity of the music. [Brian Rowe]

(Blue Room Records, P.O. Box 578040, Chicago, IL 60657-8040 USA)



Front Line Assembly
Hard Wired
Metropolis/OffBeat Records
Bill Leeb and Rhys Fulber have definitely come a long way in their 10+ year journey. Hard

Wired is an album by a band pulling out all stops to make a simply incredible album. Combining all of the best elements of the various paths they have traveled, save for hip-hop and dark ambient, into 10 songs that are equally ferocious as they are creepy. Toning down the guitars seems to be modus operandi for 1996 (see KMFDM review) and doing so as not to lose an aggressive edge, but to fine tune it. If only this were carried through to the live show, which was a

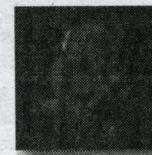
heavy metal fiesta (fiasco?). Acoustic drums and full-on guitars represented nothing Hard Wired, with its pounding electronic beats, distorted and intense analogue synth mastery along with a restrained use of guitars. Hopefully 1997 will see the continued intelligent combination of levels when adding guitar to electronic music and live shows that accurately represent that. [Andy Waggoner]

(OffBeat Records, Horster Strabe 27, 45897 Gelsenkirchen-Buer, GERMANY)



Grötüs
Mass
London Records

Grötüs throws traditional rock and even the self-proclaimed innovative post-industrial crowd for loops. Breaking rules from both camps and possibly alienating a few purist along the way (who needs em anyway?), Grötüs comes up with an album, that despite the fact that its impact is much less than their previous work, will surely please. Rock and roll through a perverted lens and with roots in the indie electro scene, Grötüs have a unique and polished sound worthy of a band of this longevity. [David Sexton]



Hate Dept.
Omnipresent
Neurotic Records

In the beginning, this CD sounds like it is just another guitar driven work that falls into the same time-tested

generic industrial sound. Tracks such as "Bitch" and "This Doggy Bites," not only leave something to be desired musically, but also in the song naming and lyrical categories. The repetitive guitar chords and the distorted vocals leave little impact on the listener. They are almost excuse enough to not bother listening to anything else on the disc, but, then "Won't Stay Lit" appears and the entire perception of the CD changes. This is a very pleasant track because it is missing all of the annoying aspects of grating guitars and lets the keyboards lead the song. Shortly following are more really good songs that are constructed in the same style, "Rejoice" and "I Don't know you." Very similar to X Marks the Pedwalk's Human Desolation, these songs beg to be listened to over and over, it is hard not to oblige. This CD has quite a bit of worthwhile music on it, but it also contains its fair share of bad songwriting and unimaginative aspects. Overall, I would rank it at being above average and would recommend it to most people as being a worthwhile purchase. [Dave Henderson]

(Neurotic Records, P.O. Box 445, Walnut, CA 91788-0445 USA - email: neurotic4u@aol.com; Hate Dept., P.O. Box 1132, Costa Mesa, CA 92627-1132 - email: hatenet@aol.com, http://exo.com/~ryan/)



Heavenside
Starless
Primitech Releases

A bit of a change from the normal repertoire of Primitech, Heavenside has a more ethereal sound which lies in stark contrast to the guitar driven indie electro-rock that Primitech is known for. Taking nods from Cocteau Twins and This Mortal Coil with angelic vocals and

invisible

invisible records p.o. box 16008 chicago, il 60616 http://www.spontaneoust.com/scd/invisible

SHEEP ON DRUGS



One For The Money inv061cd

Produced by Martin Atkins and S.O.D.
Dangerous, Decadent.
Infectious as Hell!
The U.K.'s Only
True Cult Band.
Sheep On Drugs
Return Big, Bad, and
Fatter Than Elvis!
Yours For The Taking.
A Transatlantic Marriage
Made In Heaven!

DEAD VOICES ON AIR



How Hollow Heart...

and full of flitti

"(D.V.O.A.) will change how you perceive sounds."
inv 058cd
"D.V.O.A.) weaves sonic and rhythmic textures that are
unhurting yet magnetic."

Coming in February,
the new full-length album from
SCORN



wash guitars, Heavenside will entrance and mystify you. On songs such as, "Time Flies," and "Things Change," Heavenside takes simple, minimal song structures and molds them into an incredibly wonderful work. Avoiding clichés of ethereal music such as new age mysticism so often overstated, the group instead creates good songs which are beautiful without being overpoweringly weak or soft.

[Andy Waggoner]

(Primitech Releases, P.O. Box 210330, San Francisco, CA 94121 USA)



Kevorkian Death Cycle

Collection for Injection
RAS DVA Records

Can you say "Skinny Puppy"? KDC can. For an entire album. Don't get me wrong, they do a great job at coping Skinny

Puppy's sound, but HELLO! What ever happened to originality? From distorted glutinous screams to samples from every horror movie you can name, Collection for Injection is practically Too Dark Park 1996. I think if you are at all into Skinny Puppy and their various offshoots, get KDC. You will absolutely love this album. Guaranteed. BUT, if you have an aversion against cliché and cloned bands, stay clear of KDC. If you think about it, Skinny Puppy copied Portion Control and now KDC does the same magic with their apparent idols. So, take a listen to KDC, because for those of you let down by The Process, will probably find what you were looking for here. [anon_devi]

(RAS DVA Records, P.O. Box 92575, Milwaukee, WI 53202-0575 USA)



Kiva

self titled

Fathom Records

Steve Roach, Michael Stearns and Run Sun singer join together to give the world a first time glimpse at the ceremonial music of the Native Americans of the Southwest United States. The name "Kiva" comes from the sacred place where ceremonies take place, which is a representative womb of the Earth. Intertwining the original music with new improvised synthesizers and acoustic, traditional instruments, the trio creates an aural euphoria, not unlike what one would imagine the famous journeys the Native Americans take through the mind. From the four corners of the Earth; the East, South, West and North Kivas that fill this CD and give a lulling and hopeful feeling. With chants and drumming, Kiva is a beginning for some, but can only be a symbol for Earth worshipping. It is not a handbook, but a journal of three musicians who have taken a journey into ceremony. [Andy Waggoner]

(Fathom/Hearts of Space Records, P.O. Box 31321, San Francisco, CA 94131 USA)



Klange

Green Mars

Minus Habens Records

Klange makes music in the vein of hard space-ambient à la Aphex Twin with very cool results. While Klange isn't necessarily an offspring of Aphex Twin, they do make similar music, except that Klange has a more hard-

core and dark edge. Taking electronic music into darker and hollow realms not heard since the Alien movie soundtrack, Klange is definitely something that ambient fans need to pick up for the simple fact that it may break down the traditional molds of happy-go-flaky electronic music. [anon_devi]

(Minus Habens, Via Giustino Fortunato 8/N, 70125 Bari, Italy)



Laibach

Jesus Christ Superstars

Mute Records

Everyone's favorite Slovenian band is back and it looks like they've been spending too much of their free time with

the likes of Megadeth. The happy Laibach dance music of Kapital and Nato has been cast aside for a large guitar, a couple of showtunes, and a nifty backing choir. As if the title weren't a clue, they have also changed their focus topic a bit to concentrate on the nature of religion instead of their consistent political overtones of the past. But even with the few minor alterations here and there, this is still definitely a Laibach album through and through. Their ability to convey a powerful message through the recycling of pop culture, and even a reinvention of their own work, creates their ironically distinctive stamp of originality. Andrew Lloyd Webber's "Jesus Christ Superstar" has probably never felt so alive and confused until Laibach worked their magic over it. Excellent use of orchestration and the accompanying choir create a peaceful haven from the guitar driven tracks that alternate on the CD. "Abuse and Confession" and Prince's "The Cross" work together in addition to the title track to make this a very worthwhile and perhaps the most whimsical CD that you will purchase in quite some time. Opponents of Laibach's new style may complain about the cheesy heavy metal clichés, but considering that one of their strengths is the ability to manipulate any type of

musical style (including noise, dance, classical, and rock) for their purposes, this is an incredible album. It is a very worthwhile acquisition, and can only be fully enjoyed with the comprehension of the underlying humor that gives it life. [Dave Henderson]

(Mute, 429 Harrow Road, London W10 4RC UK)



Laibach

Laibach

ROIR

This is a CD release of an older Laibach album from the early 80's. Their work at this point in their career was more

dark and mechanically oriented than more recent efforts such as Nato, Kapital, and Let it Be. It wasn't until about five or six years after this album that their dance oriented music style began to take over. Though the music on this CD is excellent, the downside is that most of the tracks are already present on Nova Akropol and Rekapitulation. If you already have these releases, one might be hesitant to pick them up again in this format, but wait, there's a catch. To make you want to purchase this CD, there are two extra tracks at the end that have yet to be released on CD until now. So, if you are unfamiliar with this part of Laibach, this release will definitely help get you up to speed, and if you are a die-hard completist, you also need to get this CD to complete your Laibach collection. [Dave Henderson]

(Reach Out Int. Records, 611 Broadway, Suite 411, NY, NY 10012 USA)

Lazarus Effect

System

Black Pumpkin Records

This talented, if not a bit misguided, New Jersey quartet is as jumpy as a room full of bored three-year-olds. Their best tracks are above average, combining old-school rhythm programming and



Namanax Cascading Waves of Electronic Turbulance

Atrax Morgue Sickness Report

Relapse Records

Both Atrax Morgue and Namanax utilize electrical feedback as their tool in creating music, but despite having this common bond, the final products are practically opposites of each other. Namanax approaches the listener with a dizzying beat that just marches along like a dutiful piece of heavy machinery. This short eleven minute song leads to the only other track on the CD which lasts for forty-seven minutes. The organization of the songs on the Namanax disc is very appropriate for this type of music because the nature of feedback lends itself to be presented in a drawn out evolution of sound rather than short three to five minute pieces. Both tracks on the Namanax disc contain very obvious rhythmic structures; the first is carried through the duration of the song and the second has a variety that evolves into one another. The logical progression of the songs makes the entire CD easier to listen to and more accessible to a wider variety of people.

This is quite different from the Atrax Morgue CD in which the songs are more abstract in nature. Still working with the same high pitched screeching and the low rumbling of feedback, Atrax Morgue have created a harsh listening experience. Most appropriately described as a feedback collage, the work of Atrax Morgue does not have the same endearing qualities that make the work of Namanax so appealing. There is organization to the songs, but it is quite loose on many of the tracks, and at times delves into pure noise. The songs are too short to fully appreciate, and the lull in between each track tends to become annoying. If the songs blended into one another then the CD would be much more pleasant to listen to all the way through. Overall, the appeal of this disc is limited to people who have a taste for noise. If that suits you, then this disc holds a lot waiting to be discovered. Namanax, on the other hand, would be a welcome addition to the CD collection of people with a variety of musical interests who might not normally look for music created with feedback. (Atrax Morgue does have to be commended for packaging their CD in a bloody rubber glove. It is quite keen.) [Dave Henderson]

(Relapse/Release Entertainment, P.O. Box 251, Millersville, PA 17551 USA)

sampling with guitar-heavy leads. Selections like "Killing Time" and "Play God" are decidedly danceable gems, with thick synthetic bass lines that are the electronic equivalent of those natural rhythms laid down by such masters as Charles Levi (Thrill Kill Kult) and Luc Van Acker (RevCo, Mussolini Headkick). Although vocalist and centrifugal force Nelson Pla does deserve some credit for not burying his voice in effects (an all-too-frequent problem with many of the genre's frontmen); the fact is that he is unable to establish a consistent and relevant vocal presence to coincide with the band's chosen musical style. Still, all things considered, System's worth the twelve or fifteen dollars you'd shell out for it. So, take it for what it is: an enjoyable, if inconsistent, debut. [Rik Milhouse]

(Black Pumpkin, P O Box 4377, Riveredge, NJ 07661)



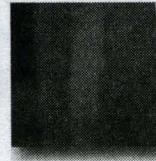
Loop Guru
Amrita, all these and the
japanese soup warriors
World Domination Records
Taking the sampler out of the
studio and into the real
world, especially the ethnic
parts of it, seems to modus operandi for the 90's
electronic artist, although I think Loop Guru may
not have ventured further than the world music
sampling CD. Despite being victims to the seemingly
closed world of studio engineered electronic
music, Loop Guru still manage to have a firm
grasp on writing tasteful and intelligent music
without falling into the pitfalls of ethno-ambient
or tribal-techno, but instead carving a niche out
of the music of history and doing so without care
for time or space. Songs like "yayli" show Loop
Guru as just that, masters of the digitized sound
byte. Worthy without being weighty, amrita is
definitely a gem. [Andy Waggoner]

(World Domination Records, 3575 Cahuenga Blvd, West #450,
LA, CA 90068 USA)



Love and Rockets
Sweet F.A.
American Records
Hot Trip to Heaven was a nice
release, but it lacked the heart
of past Love and Rockets
releases that makes every
song an exciting listening experience. Sweet F.A.
recaptures the spark of their work through the mid
to late 80's and pushes a step further. The title
track seems like it is right out of their Earth Sun
Moon material; a very easy going piece that
blends the music and lyrics in such a way that it
creates a dreamlike vision of a voyage down an
infinite highway. "Use Me" bears a strong resemblance
to work on Jesus and Mary Chain's Automatic CD, but don't misunderstand, that is a
definite compliment. "Sad and Beautiful World" is
reminiscent of the work of Express with its slowly
increasing tempo and stronger guitar emphasis.
"Here Come the Comedown" is a song that is off
in its own little world, very similar to ****(jungle
Law) in its marching tempo and delivery of the
lyrics, it just makes you tingly all over to listen to
it. It would take too much space to go through and
detail every good thing about this release, so it
would be easiest to sum up by saying this CD is a
culmination of every GREAT aspect of the music of
Love and Rockets over the past eleven years. It

also creates a great feeling of things to come from these three individuals with God-given talent. The only question that lingers is, "Can we hope that there is to be a re-emergence of the Bubblemen in the near future?" We could only be so lucky. In the meantime, lets hope that "Sweet Lover Hangover" doesn't get played to death on the radio because you know "...a million tears are gonna fall." [Dave Henderson]



loveliescrushing

xuvetyn

Projekt Records

Rather simple guitar washes and
droning shoe-gazing of bands
like Spiritualized Electric
Mainline, but minus the psycho-
delic vibe.

Instead, loveliescrushing, who sport one the best names a band like this could have, give us a darker, more brooding outlook, not uncommon for Projekt bands. Not at all death rock or gothic that one would have gathered from the fans at the Projekt Fest in Chicago this summer, but more poetic and more derivative of Velvet Underground and Leonard Cohen than Bauhaus and Sisters (even both of these bands were of the same lineage). Recommended. [anon_devi]



Meat Beat Manifesto

Subliminal Sandwich

Nothing/Play It Again

Sam Records

This double CD album by
the masters of sample heavy
electro/hip-hop is somewhat

of a long time coming, but worth the wait. Much more experimental than any other Meat Beat album to date, Subliminal Sandwich brings in long grooves and funky rhythms into the mix. Only a few songs on here bear any similarities to traditional MBM club material, and those are mostly on the second disk. Lots of great sampling as in the past, but almost no vocalization on this release. It is almost a listening record with its chill beats and slow stylings. Going into ambient forays, Mr. Dangers is treading a new path for himself with quite interesting results. The list of collaborators is a mile long, which explains the varied paths explored on these two CDs. If you are into MBM, you may be in for a surprise, but if you're hunting for something new to wet your palette, check out Subliminal Sandwich. [Andy Waggoner]



neither/neither world

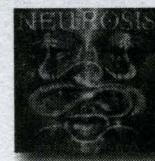
Maddening Montagery and
Other Fantastic Stories

Dark Vinyl/Com Four

The first time I listened to this
CD, I was very unimpressed
with it, but after going over it
a few more times, it really started to grow on me.
Most of the songs consist of the singer, Wendy Van
Dusen, who has sung with Dive, being accompanied
by an acoustic guitar; a combination that is utilized
to create a very melancholy tone for the entire CD.
The overall effect is enhanced by the placement of
pieces called "Montages" between the first few
songs. Very similar to the music of Lustmord's
Heresy, these songs are very slow moving, cavernous,
droning works of sound. They provide the excellent
atmosphere as they lead into the next

more "musical" piece. Anyone who has a taste for releases such as Death in June's *What Ends When Symbols Shatter* or Oral Constitution's *Bibelpreik* will be most interested in adding this CD to their collection. [Dave Henderson]

(Com-Four Distribution, 7 Dunham Place, NY, NY 11211 USA)



Neurosis
Through Silver in
Blood

Relapse Records

Neurosis take us back to their hard punk edge after the Tribes of Neurot, which was much more ambient. True to form, Neurosis display incredible talent and intensity. Throwing the rule book out the window, they show us how it's meant to be done. While there are lots of loud guitars and acoustic drums, this band knows how to use them without falling to any clichés. From the tribal-metal title track that opens the CD to the final peace "Enclosure in Flame," Neurosis take us on a trip through hell like only they can. With passages into what they learned on Tribes of Neurot, Through Silver in Blood fulfills all I would need in an album from a band like Neurosis. [Andy Waggoner]



Nightmare Lodge
Luminescence

Minus Habens/Disturbance

Records

The perfect soundtrack to an intriguing horror film, Nightmare Lodge deliver to you the drama, suspense, and wonder that you have been lacking wrapped up in a fifty minute presentation. Though it is broken up into different songs, this disc seems more appropriate as one work than a collection of smaller works. Its pace is very slow, almost too slow in sections, which makes the disc seem longer than it really is. "Mirage V" and "Luminescence" are the two outstanding tracks on the disk. Almost identical to Alien Sex Fiend's Inferno work, these tracks break away from the slow progression of the rest of the disc and move ahead at their own pace. If only the rest of the album were as interesting as these tracks. The strength of this work would be better realized as a soundtrack rather than an album, for the accompanying images in a film would add a bit more life into this work. Standing alone in only an audio format, this work does not reach its full potential. [Dave Henderson]



Numb
Christmeister

Metropolis Records

A reissue of the now classic Christmeister album that defined as much as Ministry's Land of Rape and Honey, the sound of guitar heavy post-industrial. Some songs on here most fans of this genre will undoubtedly recognize, like "Bliss" (three versions on here) and "Eugene." A must if you don't have the original on CD and maybe even if you do, because of the remixes of "Bliss" from the Bliss single. [anon_devi]



**Orbital
In Sides
Internal/FFRR**

It started on a Friday; a paltry sunset giving comfort to a chilled breeze. The dusk settles in with a stroke of frost beneath a blanket of snow. The strange chimes in a land of wonder beckons a mood of melancholy, surpassing once open gaiety. Doors shut, the hearth is forced upon the In Sides of this Orbital. The pitter-patter of innocence hangs but a stark tapestry against the far wall whilst the eerie sing-a-long melodies encircle a pattern of growth. Were it that tension hung about the balcony's rail, its foreboding beats might fall through the floor. But tempered it rings; its devastation subdued by a moment of introspective reason.

The past days of an ancient snivilisation seem distant from the inside. There is wisdom here; a sumptuous growth rising above the whimsical glee found in past Orbital constructions. Though, as introspection shrugs its shoulders and pushes farther back, to the chants of diversions and beyond, there the tapestry reveals resemblance. Mind you, the world hasn't quite ended, as there are still a few rays of shine beneath the night. The eccentricities still exist in this trajectory path, its characteristic orbital intact. [Brian Rowe]



**Out Out
Nisus
Metropolis Records**

Three albums later and Out Out will probably still slip through the cracks with a wonderful album and too little promotion and interest. Finched was one the most overlooked EBM album of the '80s and Nisus follows suit. Mark Alan Miller's vision is truly his own. Some may not find anything they can latch on to, but others, myself included, will treasure this album. Noisy samples of obscure scientific reels and odd rhythms play against harsh synths and distorted (not necessarily screamed) vocals. Unique song-writing skills really are Miller's forte and this may damn him to a life of obscurity for treading his own path in this jungle of guitar crossover music. [anon_devi]



**Pitch Yarn of Matter
Strange Body
Subtronic Records**

Electronic body music without the aggression, gothic without the pretense, synth-pop with out the quirks - all stylishly presented and well orchestrated. On Pitch Yarn of Matter's second album, Marcello serves up an extremely cohesive mix of styles, while avoiding clichés. The rich, full vocals are charming, and most of the music is very accessible - reminiscent of some of the more somber 80's classics. That's not to say Strange Body is outdated, but it will most likely be best received by a more "retro" crowd. It's probably not hard enough for most electroheads, or "goth" enough for most goths, but it combines elements of each with a distinct 80's flavour. PYM reflect another, mellow side of the raging Brazilian electro

scene, even if they won't feed your craving for flesh and metal. [Sage]

(Subtronic Records, Weissenburger Str. 8, 44135 Dortmund, Germany)



**Project Pitchfork
CH'I**

Candyland/SPV Records

Remixes form the latest album by Project Pitchfork, Alpha Omega, CH'I is a great look into PP, with excellent remixes

by various people unfamiliar to me, but the quality is distinctly German engineered. Hard beats thump throughout and Project Pitchfork's distinctive sound rings solid. Much more stylized and minimal than 01, the first PP I heard, with simple textures and synthlines, and the singer's unique voice. Basically, this CD has 7 remixes from PP's last album Alpha Omega and is just really good EBM that leaves behind any doubt that this band is one of the best bands in underground, harsh, electronic dance music in the 90's. [Andy Waggoner]

(Candyland Records, AM Büchenberge 15, 30453 Hannover GERMANY)

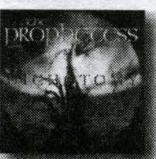


**Project Pitchfork
The Early Years 89-93**

Cleopatra Records

With three bonus songs from 1995's Corps D'Amour as an addition to this "early years" comp, we get more than we

bargained for. Project Pitchfork was the one of the first bands in the second wave of post-industrial from Europe that has taken the EBM scene by storm in the past couple of years. Early Years is an excellent collection of PP tracks from hard to find albums by one of Germany's biggest and best electro outfitts. [Andy Waggoner]



The Prophetess

Dichotomy

(self-release)

Gothic rock with forays into psychedelia. Think the Mission UK meets Jefferson Airplane with a heavy Nephilim influence. Dark western vibe like on Dawn Razor are quite welcome to the current wimpy goth music of late. Going back to the roots of goth rock with an emphasis on strong male vocals and guitars that shimmer and plunge into the depths of emotion. Prophetess present an excellent ensemble of rock flavored goth. Almost 90% of the music is live and might come off well on stage, except I can almost guarantee that the intense smoke and candles the Prophetess almost surely use will hide that fact. [anon_devi]

*(P.O. Box 9893, Fountain Valley, CA 92728-9893 USA,
email: prophetess@aol.com)*



Psychic T.V.

Cold Blue Torch

Cleopatra Records

Remixes from the last Psychic T.V. (in both senses it would seem) from remixers as diverse as Leæther Strip's Claus Larson, Spahn Ranch, and Prong's Paul Raven (sic). Despite the fact that few of these people fall into the vibe that Psychic T.V. represents, this CD may make their music more acces-

sible to the aggro-elite, at least musically. The acid mindset off Genesis P-Orridge may be lost to this crowd, but I think that's not a bad thing, because it had grown tiresome. What P-Orridge says continues to be quite amazing and inspirational, but how he says it and how he presents his message leaves a bit to be desired. Perhaps this repacking of the Chaos Magick into a darker box might give it some more credibility to a crowd that might be the most in need of it. [anon_devi]



Puissance

Let Us Lead

Cold Meat Industry Records

The darkness of In Slaughter Natives comes close to being met by Puissance, but on a different level. Where In

Slaughter Native's bleak nature is masterfully crafted through more electronic/synthetic means, Puissance reaches into a classical background to weave their creations. "Behold the Valiant Misanthropist" is lead by an orchestra of violins and other string instruments with an accompanying chanting that creates a vivid backdrop for the soft spoken vocals. "March of the Puissant" is exactly what the title suggests, it is a militaristic marching song, almost medieval in nature. Followed swiftly by "Global Deathrape," it is obvious that Puissance have a very depressing story to tell. Luckily, the CD ends almost on an uplifting note, or at least as close as you can come in this case. The entire CD is a pleasure to listen to, and holds a lot of promise for what Puissance will be able to produce in the future. Though it is not as powerful as In Slaughter Natives' works, it is a very good companion to them, for those who are interested. [Dave Henderson]

(Cold Meat Industry, P.O. Box 1881, 581 17 Linkoping Sweden)



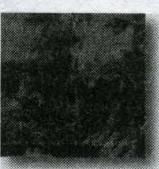
Queue Up

Possession

Grid Records

Reminiscent of Concrete Blond with a strong female vocalist and hard modern rock, Queue Up might struggle to get past a bad name, but with a weak sound. Far from weak, it is furious, but with more than enough straight ahead song writing for modern rock radio. Interesting, but nothing really to grab onto or really make me want to recommend this. [anon_devi]

(Grid Records, P.O. Box 29385, Cleveland, OH 44129 USA)



The Best of James Ray's

Performance and Gangwar

Fifth Column Records

Despite what the title may suggest, this is little more than a re-release of two CDs by James Ray conveniently compacted onto one CD. The first five songs were taken from James Ray and the Performance's A New Kind of Assassin CD. It in itself was a compilation of a few selections from their 12"s. On the Fifth Column release, they left off the "Mexico Sundance Blues (edit)," but that is not a major loss since they were kind enough to provide the extended version. Tracks six through fourteen were

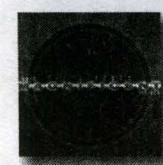
taken from James Ray's *Gangwar* *Dios Esta De Nuestro Lado*. James Ray should be a name familiar to all fans of *The Sisters of Mercy* since he was kind enough to lend his vocals to "Giving Ground" on the *Sisterhood* Album. Andrew Eldritch's production talents seem to have influenced Ray's ironically similar musical style. Everything from a mistakeable voice close to Eldritch's, to the Doktor Avalanche styled drum programming. The songs are not as guitar oriented as much of the Sisters' work, but they are definitely in the same vein, and a treat to any reptiles who have not yet bothered to shell out the money to buy these items on import. Now is your chance to get them at a convenient price, just be kind enough to ignore the unpleasant black type on an orange background and the nasty typo included in the CD booklet. [Dave Henderson]



Robert Rich
A Trouble Resting Place
Fathom Records

If ever in the need of something to calm your nerves and to aid in relaxation, Robert Rich will be there for you.

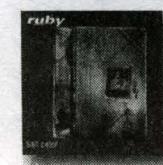
This collection of compilation appearances from 1993-95 is perfect for the tense person in all of us. Slow and dreamy tracks on this disc can really overpower your ability to retain alertness and coherence. Somewhat in the vein of Lustmord, but less dynamic, Rich's songs are all very slow and ambient. At times, the minimalism is enough to make the easy mistake of forgetting that the CD is still playing, but perhaps that can be considered an attribute. Sounds of dripping water, soft flute playing, the subtle rattling of beads all work together to create appropriate background music for light activity and even sleeping. This CD is nice for what its worth, but it leaves me without a desire to acquire any additional releases by Robert Rich. [Dave Henderson]



Steve Roach
Magnificent Void
Fathom Records

Steve Roach takes us into realms only imagined by other so called "ambient" artists. Extremely spiritual,

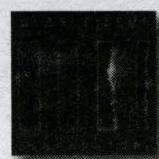
Magnificent Void is one the most appropriately named albums ever. Floating and expansive, *Magnificent Void* is an album that demands to be taken seriously. Set aside an hour or so of your day and enjoy this album to its fullest. Create an atmosphere for you to fully enjoy it in and let its slow and dreamy scapes take you far into your psyche. Never has there been a more accurate representation of outer space in musical form than here and it also doubles as an avenue to inner space. A meditative state is most appropriate for this work. [anon_devi]



Ruby
Salt Peter
Creation/Sony Records

Ruby is Lesley Rankine, who has served time with Pigface and is the former front woman of the aggro-noise band Silverfish. Though the music of Ruby is a bit less

aggressive or abrasive than her previous work, it is no less bold or brash. Rankine's voice is quite versatile, climbing from a sensuous whisper to a wail back down to a rolling growl atop trip-hop beats and heavy electro/techno instrumentation. Focusing on a side "that wasn't getting out" when she was with Silverfish, Rankine's latest offerings are mature, honest and, most of all pure, being that she wrote and recorded almost the entire album herself, with help from engineer/producer Mark Walk (Skinny Puppy, Pigface, W.E.L.T.). She also designed the cover art herself, lending yet another dimension to this personal, provocative, almost autobiographical work. [Veronica Kirchoff]



Scar Tissue

Separator

21st Circuitry Records

Scar Tissue's debut CD is finally made available to you, the consumer, via the services of 21st Circuitry Records. Nifty

is not a word strong enough to express this band's work, so we will settle with calling it keen. Distortion, partially comprehensible lyrics, great programming, and a superb package with the picture of a toy raygun are only a few of the neat things that come with owning this album. Create a mixture of the structured, rhythmic side of Le Syndicat, the programming of Signs ov Chaos, and a bit of the lyrical stylings of X Marks the Pedwalk and you can have a sense of what *Scar Tissue* is creating. Leaning towards the more experimental side of electronic composition, they are forging ahead in creating works that will become the standard of comparison for future musicians. This is certainly a band to pay attention to now, so don't ask questions... just do it. [Dave Henderson]

(21st Circuitry Records, P.O. Box 170100, San Francisco, CA 94117 USA)



Severed Heads

Gigapus

Decibel/Volition Records

This album was released originally in 1994 on Volition and was, I believe, rejected from Nettwerk Records, the label

that SH used to be on. It's good to finally have this album in the States and the wait has definitely been worth it. SH have an incredible pop-sensibility while still being able to churn out an incredible pure electronic album. Tom Ellard's odd sense of humor is still present on *Gigapus* with song titles such as "The Importance of Hair." The best song on here, by far, is the opening track "Heart of the Party," which screams out retro and vibrant flavor. *Severed Heads* have outlived their peers with music that is uncommercial, yet is still so damn catchy and fun. I think that that the humor that Ellard puts out is part of the reason for this longevity. Without taking himself too seriously, while still giving a lot of effort to what he's releasing, *Severed Heads* will undoubtedly be around for a while longer, tucked away in distant Australia. [Andy Waggoner]



Sheep on Drugs

Double Trouble

Invisible Records

Sheep on Drugs take electronic dance music further into the future and deeper into the underbelly of rock and roll

with Double Trouble, two EPs slapped together as a teaser for the new album, due out shortly. Using jungle beats and the usual biting lyrics of Duncan, *Sheep on Drugs* expand out a bit. Whether fans will receive them well on this or not remains to be seen, but I think the change is worth it. SOD have always been about taking new music and twisting it into a mockery of the whole music and entertainment industry, much less the rest of society. Much better than the performance on this year's mini tour and a look into what the new SOD album holds for us. [anon_devi]

(Invisible Records, P.O. Box 16008, Chicago, IL 60616 USA)



Shinjuku Thief

The Witch Hunter

Europe: Dobro Records

US: Projekt/ Darkwave

Australian band *Shinjuku Thief* moved further from their earlier leanings toward

Middle-Eastern music with their 1993 release, *The Witch Hammer*. Forsaking jihads and sand-swept bazaars, the disc recreated the plague-infested landscape of 14th century Europe by mixing gothic German orchestration with a sinister quiet and calm. *The Witch Hunter*, their sequel CD, transports the listener six hundred years into the future to witness Europe under a different ravage, the Second World War. Or that's one possible interpretation. While song titles such as "Prelude: In the Wake of Walpurga's Ashes" and "A Black Furrow" reflect an era knee-deep in heretics and medicinal leeches, the music has a modern feel, though still foreboding. For instance, the foreground to "Cobwebs and Vinegar" sounds like a scratchy, skipping waltz record while a voice mumbles into a groaning wind. Depending on your current state of phobia, "Marias' Shirt" is either a soundtrack to a Allied submarine sweeping the desolate ocean for mines or troubled, raspy breathing inside an iron lung. A couple tracks break the hypnotic state of lurking violence. "Berserkir," with its heavy military percussion and sharp trumpet blasts, jarringly recalls the work pioneered by industrial band Test Dept. On the other extreme, one or two songs rely too much on ethereal atmosphere, like "Blue Flame" and "Four Ember Weeks of Ecstatic Sleep." The tracks are so whispery that you need to be sitting in a dark room with headphones to adequately hear the subtle variations of stark tones and growls. However, you and your stereo may be already hiding in a closet or under a desk as you listen to this disc and wait for the bombs to drop. [Michael Woodring]

(Dobro Records, PO Box 2, Glen Waverley, Victoria 3150 AUSTRALIA)

Sleep Chamber

Some Godz Die Young

Inner-X Musick

Whether you see him as a musical genius or as a sexual deviant, *Sleep Chamber's* John Zewizz is nothing if not prolific. With over a dozen releases

spanning more than ten years, Zewizz has built a reputation for pioneering an entirely subversive underground musical style; creating an electronic sub-culture filled with wanton sexual abandon. This five-song EP captures the Boston band at one of their most accessible moments. At times reminiscent of early Dirk Ivens/Marc Verhaeghen (aka Klinik) material, this disc could hardly be considered offensive, even if you've found other releases by this seminal artist too hard to stomach. This reviewer has never considered himself much of a fan of the band, but this new offering from Sleep Chamber is a definite keeper. [Rik Milhouse]

(James Reality/Inner-X, 191 Boylston Street, Boston, MA 02215)

Sounds From the Ground

Kin

Waveform Records

Finally, the sun has set after another slump deep within the heart of the city. A stroll in the park is the perfect solace, as spacy synth sounds, transposed with an ever-vogue reggae-dub-spliff-smoking beats and grooves, waft lazily across the grass. SFTG offers mellow atmospheres for a lazy day, where soothing melodies caress a weary mind. The typical Waveform agenda. And then come the horns with an ever-more spaced-out funk, to raise the spirits from their moment of silence. It's time to stroll to the river's bank and shake that thang. Kin creates a wonderful atmosphere, ready to descend and smother one's mind, with its balanced bass lines and laid-back melodies. Within this strange array one finds sounds from the ground, as birds and crickets creep out from behind the trees and enter nature's communion. This is the continuity that makes Kin such a refreshing album, for it utilizes the combined efforts of many styles and sounds to create a more unified sound. [Brian Rowe]



Spahn Ranch

In Parts Assembled Solely Cleopatra Records

I had high expectations for this CD, containing remixes of songs found on the album The Coiled One. I think a lot

more could have been done with this; it's just remixes of "Vortex," "Heretic's Fork," "Locusts" and "Compression Test" and live versions of "Judas Cradle," "Vortex" and "Compression Test," which aren't at the height of aural pleasure. They're good, but not great. With a total of ten tracks, I would have liked to see more than five songs covered. Most of the remixes were done by Überzone and Birmingham 6, with one by engineer Judson Leach. Between Überzone and Birmingham 6, the mixes were quite dissimilar, even when they had remixed the same song, but I was rather dissatisfied with Birmingham 6's two very similar mixes of Heretic's Fork, one with vocals and one without. Apparently, Birmingham 6 was given a choice between two tracks: "Heretic's Fork" and "Locusts," which were sent to them on DAT. The DAT ran out in the middle of "Locusts," (You'd think if someone were sending out songs to be remixed, they'd want to send the whole song. Oh, well...), so they actually had no choice. The instrumental mix was not originally intended for release; only for the band to use for live purposes. It made

it onto the CD anyway. I would have appreciated another remix of a completely different song. [Veronica Kirchoff]



Steril

Egoism

21st Circuitry/Offbeat Records

This is Steril's 2nd release that I know of. It is stylistically similar to their first release, Transmission Pervious.

Sampled movie dialogue, distorted guitar, catchy melodies, and danceable beats create music that is perfect for the dancefloor. Although you won't find anything too groundbreaking or innovative on this album, Steril are adept at creating good E.B.M., with gothic overtones. Every week at the clubs I go to, I hear at least one song by Steril. Standouts on this album are "Overgod," "Lies," and "Egoist." The album also includes two mixes of "Egoist," which are sure to be club favorites. Steril are good at what they do, and Egoism is an excellent second release. [Jeff Ernst]

(21st Circuitry Records, P.O. Box 170100, San Francisco 94117 USA)

Mark Stewart

Control Data

Mute Records

After nearly six years of absence, Mark Stewart is back with his new album Control Data. This time, Stewart got help from Simon Mundey, Doug Wimbish, Skip McDonald, Style Scott and Adrian Sherwood. They created ten songs with their unique sound mixture of vocoded singing, effects and dub. Turn up the volume and listen to post-industrial music from Bristol, England. "Dream Kitchen" is the middle fast opener with a strong underground bass, speedy high hats and snare drum attacks. Faster is "Forbidden Love". The heavy bass line builds the basis and the lovely melody sequences are dominating the singing from the distance. Then the rhythm slows down a little for "Red Zone" with a deep fat bass, spacy sound effects and multiple dubbing. "Scorpio" is a Reggae style song and allows you to rest a while. But then comes "Consumed" which blasts you away with hurting snares, fast bass drums, bouncing guitar effects and heavy distorted vocals. "Data Blast" is a short instrumental and sounds like the suffering of computers during data processing. Followed by "Digital Justice" you get your punishment by an anarchic rhythm section. The next one is "Simulacra". You want to hear this club smash again and again. And your longing for guitar sounds will be satisfied with "The Half" completely. Closing track is the less noisy "Blood Money 2" and the almost one hour of sweet torture is over. But I cannot resist and want more, and more, and more... [Ingo Meier]



Swamp Terrorists

Killer and Wreck

Metropolis Records

Swedish electro-ists, Swamp Terrorists have released their finest yet with these two CDs. Combining hip-hop influenced

dance beats with speed metal guitars and growling vocals, ST have always suffered from a KMFDM overshadow. With these two releases, one a full length (Killer) and one a long play remix CD

(Wreck), Swamp Terrorists show that they are one of the best in this sub-genre that's only led by KMFDM, not dominated by. Being much more dynamic than KMFDM, with layer upon layer of beats, samples, synths and guitars, ST create a full swirling mass of sound. A member of MACOS (Musicians Against Copyright of Samples), they utilize samples, both musical and vocal, with skill and precision. A studio masterpiece, Killer flows from one aggro song to the next. Not an album for the timid, but a hard and heavy electronic experience. [anon_devi]



Sweat Engine

Multiple Insertions

Pan Handler Productions

This is actually a mix of a rather bland Aggro-Tech audio album by Sweat Engine and a CD-ROM track by a many number of people, bands and artists. The data track is really the best thing on this disk. It runs on almost any platform available. If you're computer has a CD drive, it can read this. Even if you don't, there is an HTML version on here for web-browsers. The program is almost like a website where it is little more than a giant press kit for a good chunk of the scene. Bits and pieces of art, sounds, Quicktime™ movies, etc., all with the appropriate contact info. There really isn't enough on here to be satisfying, but there is definitely a whole lot to wet your appetite for more. It's worth checking out just to get exposed to new people and the work they do. [Andy Waggoner]

Test Dept.

Totality

Invisible Records

On their latest release, these revolutionary Teutonic Brits offer not the Welsh or South Wales Striking Miners Choirs, but instead more traditional house-style beats, in the vein of contemporary Meat Beat Manifesto work. Removing virtually all the noise and experimental programming that, twelve years ago, linked them with Einsturzende Neubauten as enigmatic brethren; Test Dept. returns as a watered-down shadow of their political and musical past. Just like real life, though, it's impossible for the band to totally flee from their origins; as is indicated by the orchestral swoops and mid-tempo break-down in the second track, "Chillo (Sunrise)." Overall, this release is disappointing only to those who've followed the band and appreciated them most for their a-musicality. Others, in search simply of good dub-friendly dance, will be impressed by the ease at which Test Dept. makes the transition. [Rik Milhouse]



Trylok

Interminable

Music Research Records

Pulling immense influence from '80s hardcore synth club music ala Front 242 or Skinny Puppy, circa 86 or so, Trylok's second album sounds a bit dated when put next to albums from this period. Not a bad thing at all, it's just a bit tired and there has been many innovations in electronic music since then.

Trylok employ the traditional synth lines that

beta testing

A Different Kind of Cop .dmo (4-song demo cassette)

The first song, "Conscience," is a bit simple for me; I just happen to like more complex stuff – layered, thick. This is rather thin, and doesn't really stick. The vocals have that "I really can't sing so I'm giving up trying and reveling in it" kind of vibe. Not that I'm saying this guy can't sing; if it's the same guy as on the other tracks, he definitely can. The second song is much more complex than the first. The sequencing and vocal effects are well-done, and it's just a lot more "beefy." The third song has a nice, hearty consistency as well, and the vocals are acceptable. During the chorus, they break into this almost "gothy" style, like that Peter Murphy enunciation thing. The last song, "Machine Humaine," is the best. I wish I had this on CD, because I'd put this track on repeat play and be happy for days. The synth work is top notch; the mixing, vocals and effects are perfect; and it's just a really haunting, beautiful – yet danceable – song. If ADKOC stays on this path, they're headed for big things. [Veronica Kirchoff]

(T. Samoff, 746A Polli St., Ventura, CA 93001 or email: StatikAge@aol.com)

Biofeedback Incision

Hailing from smack dab in the middle of the megapolis, Biofeedback are everything you would expect from a band with that name. Distorted drums, hard synths, a little guitar and bass thrown in for good measure, noisy samples from SciFi and

Horror movies and vocals wet with WAY too much effects. A bit tired and testosterone for me right now, but done with a conviction that makes it quite admirable. The production is the average dry and muddy of bands at this level. The best thing about this band is to take a genre that is five years past its prime and use intelligent songwriting and good use of dynamics to create an interesting album. Utilizing slow, mellow moments between the harshness, gives the listener a break and Biofeedback does that well. [Andy Waggoner]

(P.O. Box 107, Savage, MD 20763 USA)

Igor-Vocksverkah

This release is comprised of music made entirely of manipulating voice samples through a variety of means. The result is an interesting collection of rhythm and beats, but nothing more. The longest song on the tape is about a minute in duration, which makes it very difficult to appreciate because once a decent rhythm is established, the song is over. The use of short, almost thought provoking sound effects, is very reminiscent of Big City Orchestra's various sound effects libraries. Even though Big City Orchestra can tend to be a lot more abstract in their presentation, the concept of Igor's tape falls right in line with their work. By further developing the ideas currently in their infancy on this release, there is a lot of room for potentially good music in this vein. [Dave Henderson]

IMMP, P.O. Box 418, Princeton, New Jersey 08542

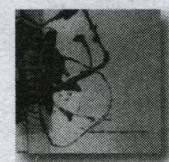
bounce in 16 note configurations over 4/4 dance beats with angry male vocals. Not bad and kind of fun if you're in a retro mood, but not exactly stimulating creative-wise. This second release by Trylok could easily serve as a badge of honor for die-hard fans of Music Research, especially the Zoth Ommog releases. [anon_devi]

(Music Research, Norsk-Data-Strasse 3, D-61352 Bad Homburg GERMANY)

Under the Noise of generation and corruption C.O.P. International

In my opinion, Under the Noise is probably the best band on C.O.P. Despite a huge Bigod zo influence that I didn't even notice until someone pointed it out to me, UTN are one of my favorite new bands. Rich and lush, with lots of well-programmed and sampled sounds, UTN's sound is memorable and, at times, awe inspiring. This album is much more dynamic than the three track EPs from 1995, with softer songs filling in the holes around the heavy beat post-industrial. The remixes are more club oriented, yet the entire album is good enough to sit home and listen intently to. Not just background

mediocrity, but well-done and quality stuff. I highly recommend this and the two three song singles UTN previously released. [anon_devi]



Underworld

Second Toughest in the Infants
Wax Trax!/TVT Records

This is not a rehash of Dubnobasswithmyheadman, and that is a fact to live with.

There aren't as many strong tracks as the previous, but compared to most other electronic bands, this entire CD is ten times as good as most everything else being released. Since 1994, Underworld have been seen as one of the most innovative forces behind dance music, and they obviously have a lot of energy and inspiration to share with everyone. "Pearl's Girl" is the runaway winning track on this disk (it is so good that they released two singles for it...go figure). After a breath taking two and a half minute introduction, this song brings forth the attributes that make most of Underworld's work great. "Rowla" comes in at a close second to "Pearl's Girl," but it lacks the spark that would put it over the top. Quite unique to many music circles, Underworld

Next Level X Sacrifice Sessions

This cassette is what appears to be a gothic/electronic band. (Just in case you can't tell by the music, then the stereotypical use of a "standard" gothic-ish font, the incorporation of chains into the artwork, and the term "Sacrifice" utilized in the title will be a dead give away that this is gothic band.) Listening to the music is not as easy as determining what genre these people are striving to be lumped in with, frankly because the sound is HORRIBLE on this tape. It sounds as if this is a fourth or fifth generation copy of an already bad original. All of the music is muted, and there is distortion in places where it is obviously not intended. I can't comment on the vocals because they are washed out to the point of being unintelligible, but on the bright side, there is a nice mix of guitars and electronic effects that does make for a partially interesting sound. Assuming they were actually allowed to record this tape in a real studio, they stand a chance at being an average group of goth rockers. (Perhaps they have hairstyles good enough to get a record deal...it worked for London After Midnight.) [Dave Henderson]

New Strain, 17 South St., Butler, PA 16001

Sixtus V demo

From the get-go, Sixthus V shows more quality and integrity than most demos. A three member band that touts its ability to play all the instruments (acoustic and electronic) live, Sixthus V (change the name guys) remind me of an early haujobb with their use of technoid melodies and dark samples with the addition of the aforementioned acoustic instruments. The uniqueness of the band behind figure head Tobias Kienle will be what helps this new band get ahead. [anon_devi]

allow time for their songs to develop and reveal themselves gradually over an average song length of 7-10 minutes. Within that duration of time, the music evolves and has a sense of direction which is something that is often lost on simplistic songs based on simple guitar or keyboard chord repetition. Despite often having a nonsensical lyrical content, their music has an unusual sense of depth and warmth to it. "Cowgirl" greeted you with "I'm invisible..." and now with "Confusion the Waitress", "She said that you can do whatever you want..." Though Second Toughest in the Infants isn't as catchy as Dubnobass... it is sure not to disappoint. Disregarding the 80's releases, Underworld have carved out their own little environment among dance music and other electronic artists with unmatched creativity and originality. Don't hesitate to investigate their work further because it will be what many bands will begin to emulate in a short time. And, as a handy reminder, Underworld puts out a large volume of singles and EPs that have numerous unique remixes and unreleased tracks that make it worth the extra effort to obtain. So, go forth and consume Underworld brand products. Now. [Dave Henderson]



Unit: 187
self titled

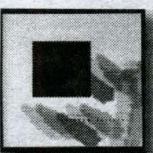
21st Circuitry Records
I had heard a lot of good things about Unit87 on the 'net. People were giving them excellent reviews for their live shows, including Siebold from Hate Dept. So I begged to be the person to review this CD. Umm, maybe it is just me, maybe I just expected too much, or maybe they don't sound quite as good on CD as they do live, but I wasn't too terribly impressed by the self-titled release by Unit87. Unit87 create guitar, synth and sample based music that just sounds a little thin. Don't get me wrong, there is a lot of potential there, and from what I have heard, I definitely want to see Unit87 live. I think they just have a little growing to do. Also, the singer's voice kinda sounded like that guy from E.M.F. This genre is kind of saturated, and it takes quite a bit to stand out from the rest of the crowd. With some more work, I believe Unit87 could become a band to watch. [Jeff Ernst]



Urbanatribu
Urbanatribu

Minus Habens Records
Massimiliano Bocchio takes time off from his busy schedule with Klange to help Flavio Gemma with a new project

entitled Urbanatribu. As the name suggests Urbanatribu examines more of the cultural aspect of electronic music and is of a very organic composition rather than the sterile environments of the vacuum of space that Bocchio usually enlightens his audience with. Urbanatribu explores the musical perimeter of nature and tribal ritual via electronic music much in the way the jungle genre seems to be headed except with a much more reserved and ambient manifestation on a theme. The role of magic in the function of nature is even tacitly explored with a reference to John Constantine, a character from DC Comics "Hellblazer". One of John Constantine's roles in his paradigm is of the guardian of the world's most up and coming magician. A magician whose role in the eventual evolution of magic is of utmost importance. I can see a distinct parallel between the comic and the music as almost a soundtrack to Constantine's life and definitely as a tribute to the character which is something I haven't ever heard being done with this musical genre before and receives a nod of appreciation for interweaving two of my favorite mediums. [Jester]



Various Artists
Atomic Weight

Iridium/Dorobo Records
With the world collectively staring down the barrel of a closing millennium and hoping that the Great Space-Ark

returns to claim us before we fulfill a doomsday prophecy or two, the latest release from Iridium appears less like a compilation of musicians and more like a soundtrack to our growing paranoia. What kind of conspiracy arranged Atomic Weight to flow seamlessly from one artist to the next, giving the impression of a single, complex song dedicated to our demise? The answer lies with Darrin



Skinny Puppy Brap: Back and Forth Volumes 3 & 4
Nettwerk/Off Beat Records

The Skinny Puppy double CD, a continuation of the original Back and Forth rarities CD from 1989, is a rather unique release because you have two versions to choose from. The German release on Off Beat records comes with the ever-so-elusive "Left Handshake" track that's missing from the Nettwerk release. This is the mysterious track 10 that was pulled from Last Rights due to problems clearing the Timothy Leary sample. Despite still not being cleared, Off Beat included the track on this import release of the CD which is said to be limited to 5000. What the Off Beat release is missing is the extensive CD-ROM tracks that Nettwerk has included at the beginning of each disc (see review below). So both versions have their benefits, it is just a matter of which is more appealing, if not both. Regarding the collection as a whole, it will please fans of both the new and old sound of Skinny Puppy. Disc one covers unreleased material from 1983 and 1984, and needless to say, the songs are almost identical in construction to the Remission and Bites era; right down to the numerous samples from The Legend of Hell House. The second disc is pretty much a collection of live recordings from the Too Dark Park Tour in 1990. All of the songs are enjoyable to hear live versions, except the recording of "Tin Omen" is quite annoying. The volume level starts out low and then moves up half-way through the song. This seems like it is a bad bootleg recording and doesn't belong on a release such as this. Even with that minor low point, this is an excellent look at the evolution of Skinny Puppy over the years and the question is not whether or not to buy it, but rather which version do you want. [Dave Henderson]

Brap - the enhanced CD

Astounding design in both basic art and in interface design, Brap stands out as a lasting tribute to one of the greatest bands to take advantage of the visual mediums to enhance the sound from the get-go. With clips of concerts and home videos from tours, as well as videos for songs, some new to even the most rabid Puppy collector, as well as an extensive discography with notes on each release, these discs are more than worth the price of the CDs in and of itself, not to mention the music also on the disc. Disc two features a game to hunt down more toys and surprises to open doors to the mind of this band, while disc one is has a 3-D world of the album art for Too Dark Park, originally done by long-time Puppy cohort, I, Braineater. Clicking on various creatures within the art lead to different video clips and other assorted tidbits. The multimedia portions of Brap run on Mac with system 7.5.x recommended and on an IBM compatible with Windows 95 recommended. [Andy Waggoner]



Download The Eyes of Stanley Pain

Download Sidewinder EP
Nettwerk/Off Beat Records

These two releases from Download, featuring cEvin key and the late Dwayne Goettel of Skinny Puppy and Mark Spybey of Dead Voices on Air, along with Genesis P-Orridge of Psychic T.V. and DJ Philth, are much more of a refreshing recovery from the break-up of Skinny Puppy than the releases on Cleopatra

early this year. Almost as though the band kept the better tracks for a better distributed/promoted Nettwerk releasing, these two CDs, one a full length and the other an EP, shimmer with innovation and amazing craftsmanship in both music and packaging presentation. These CDs, as well as the Brap CD feature artwork by Dave McKean. With a sound that relies almost entirely on synth and voice and the improvisational aspects of both, Download is as refreshing as it is innovative, when compared to the Process, Skinny Puppy's last album which was laden with metal guitar. So much more organic and vibrant than almost any other release this year, The Eyes of Stanley Pain is analog heaven with key's vast array of synths, but never leaves behind the late great genius of Goettel, who wielded a sampler like it was his birthright. Underneath it all is the noise and aural soundscape of Spybey, who as the bands singer takes quite a big role in this band, which, in this writer's opinion, is more mainstream than DVOA. Not to say that Download will garner this musicians a fortune, but it will earn them a place, once again, in the musical history books. [Andy Waggoner]

(Nettwerk Records, 632 Broadway, Suite 301, New York, NY 10012 USA;
OffBeat Records, Horster Strabe 27, 45897 Gelsenkirchen-Buer, GERMANY)

Verhagen, founder of both the Dorobo and Iridium labels. Last year, Dorobo released Document 02 - Sine, a compilation of previously released isolationist music from Japanese artists such as Dumb Type, Ryoji Ikeda, and Yoshio Ojima. The Atomic Weight disc is a companion to this earlier release, offering spooky, minimalist techno from most of the same artists. Like Document 02, Atomic Weight is organized and mixed together so fluidly that it gives the impression of listening to a work ordered by one voice instead of by an array of musicians. In this instance, the voice speaks as if it is foretelling the story of imminent world

destruction. The first section of the disc is dominated by tracks from Dumb Type, which set the background of covert action and espionage. For instance, the driving forces behind "Passport Control" are computer bleeps, loops of subdued rhythm, and an impersonal voice reciting 'official,' yet increasingly absurd, border-patrol questions ('Do you have some form of identification? How fast can you run 100 meters?'). This plot climaxes with "Counter-Invention," a song that slowly builds from a mixture of disjointed conversation snippets and electronic beats to aggressive rants and a pulsating warning buzzer. Ikeda picks up where the

bombs left off with two tracks of static atmosphere and electronics. In fact, "Abstractions" sounds more like a test from the Emergency Broadcast System, except that there are no humans left to hear the signal. The remainder of Atomic Weight plays out like a remix to the apocalypse. Ikeda returns under the identity of CCI Sound Systems with "Mind Implosion," a spacey, low-key techno piece that incorporates earlier voice samples like ghostly after images, and Yoshio Ojima delivers "Discomposure," the only upbeat song on the disc, as if leaving a final legacy of hope. That is, until the final, unnamed track plays—an echo reverberated continuously until it, and the disc, are unceremoniously snuffed. [Michael Woodring]

Various Artists
Biotech 02
SDS Productions

A follow-up to Biotech 01, which was a collection of bands from Colorado, Biotech 02 branches out a bit and brings in people from other parts of the U.S. There are about three or four tracks on this compilation that are worth being recognized. Fiction 8's "Hearts of Cinder" has the common "industrial" sound perfected. They don't have any surprises in store, but they are worthy of a few listens. Noxious Emotion is a bit more musically interesting than Fiction 8. Throughout the introduction there is a lot more variation within the music which makes it a lot less dull. Entity and Osiris bring a bit of variety to this collection by offering more of a club oriented music styling. They are quite refreshing after most of the other bands that rely on the same standard song construction to work with. It tends to get monotonous, and less bearable towards the end of the CD. Luckily Entity and Osiris are there to add a sparkle of change to the progression. If asked, I would give this collection a b-/c+ grade. It is average, but it would be nice to hold onto and see where the participants might end up in a few years. Who knows? [Dave Henderson]

(SDS Productions, P.O. Box 0805, Georgetown, TX 78627-0805)



Various Artists
Complications
Decibel Records
The selections from Alien Faktor and Oneiroid Psychosis stand out in comparison to Morpheus Sister's contributions

tions in this three band compilation. The remix of Oneirod Psychosis' "Purification" by Gary Dassing (Mentallo & the Fixer) provided the most outstanding song of the collection. The music and the vocals come together to create a feeling of fluid movement through the entirety of the song. "Mind's I" starts out wonderfully, but the garbled effects on the vocals make it pale in comparison to the original version found on Stillbirth. Alien Faktor apparently have figured out how to utilize a guitar in their songs so as to have it be a benefit and not detriment. This is most obvious in "Kill Me" in which the addition of the guitar is able to enhance the keyboards and drumming. Much unlike Morpheus Sister, in which the guitars actually bog down the music, giving it the impression that it is being held back from reaching its full potential. This seems to happen in each of the Morpheus Sister contributions to the CD making

them the least desirable aspect of the overall presentation. Not to mention that the vocals on "Slow" are in serious need of some help. They are out of place in respect to the rest of the song, which in turn makes them very annoying. Despite these few negative aspects, this is a very worthwhile CD to pick up; especially if this is to be the first taste a person were to have of these three bands. It is not spectacular, but still a worthwhile collection. [Dave Henderson]



Various Artists
Dimensions in Ambience
Quango Music

It is said that at the end of every rainbow lies a pot of gold. In its brilliance, it glows of a lush luminescence, irradiating the surmised surroundings with its lack luster qualities. And though, to find such a treasure among the throngs of shining rainbows falls bleak, the dream is never lost. Whereupon we open our eyes to a new dimension and find the jewel in our hands.

Storm clouds yield to the brilliance of the rainbow, parting its bows somewhere between sadness and joy. And amidst this drab influence of the all-too-common-nimbus of ambient compilations, there is yet hope. Shrouded in veils of bland packaging arrives a brilliant compilation from Quango, in which manifest Dimensions in Ambience. A feat rarely realized, yet so often strived for, Dimensions in Ambience defines a single emotive tone, gradually working and melding the various subtleties of its form. The tracks mix fluidly into one another, seamlessly, though preserving their autonomy. Every pore glistens with stimulating innovation, avoiding the coma-like ambient that haunts many albums. Yet one finds that many tracks range between two and three years old; the moral is left unsaid!

Deep, resonating bass and gentle synths are soaked with electronics that twist and flange to the harmony of the sky. With a cumulus stride, the clouds roll by, tingling of airy, nonchalant rhythms. This wonderland stays true to its name, opening the door to that different dimension, the one often overlooked by the estranged. [Brian Rowe]



Various Artists
Hackers soundtrack
Edel Company

Even though you may have thought the movie sucked (it wasn't that bad! Johnny Lee Miller's pretty hip...), the soundtrack definitely makes up for it. Bringing together some of the biggest and best names in the club scene, including Prodigy and Leftfield, the Hackers soundtrack definitely stands out as one the best soundtracks in this age of "Ooh, yet another shitty soundtrack!" If you're looking to get into techno and aren't sure where to start, this may be the place for you to hop on. There are a good handful of non-techno tracks, including "Connected" by Stereo MC's and "Richest Junkie..." from Machines of Loving Grace, and the techno tracks are a bit old and by more well-known artists, but overall, this is an acceptable place to get into something new. [Andy Waggoner]



Various Artists
Hazardous Moving Parts Exposed
Factoria Music
Indie electro bands from Vancouver, Canada come together to make a compilation in the spirit of punk comps by labels who only put out comps by small bands, but always throwing in a signed band or two for selling points. On Hazardous..., that band is Unit 187 (21st Circuitry), except that the track on here is an album track, so there isn't much of a selling point there. That doesn't matter though, because the rest of the comp still has some really good tracks that make it quite worth the price of admission. The Fourth Man (who's only member is now in Numb) give us an intense song with incredible sampling and a hard beat ala Leæther Strip. Most of the music is hard electro with a even amount of guitar thrown in for good measure, except with Children of Atom, a Stabbing Westward rock clone. Hazardous... is as varied as the current scene is today. An excellent comp with a great collection of bands, as well as a good look into what's going on in Vancouver. [Andy Waggoner]



(Factoria Music, #504 • 884 Bute Street, Vancouver, B.C. CANADA, email: factoria@helix.net)

Various Artists

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Various Artists
Industrial Fucking Strength
Earache Records
Industrial Strength Records from NYC has been pumping out Hardcore techno for a few years. What Hardcore is, for the neophyte, is 180+ BPM techno with hard, distorted synths and distorted 909 kicks with a few samples thrown in. Fans of abrasive dance, including EBM, should check this out. Definitely not for the timid or the weekend "house" enthusiast. This comp takes you through the first 12" up to newer releases. The second disk is two tracks long, each a long mix by a club DJ. [anon_devi]



Various Artists
Logical Progression
FFRR

Drum and bass is the newest segment of techno. Started apparently by L.T.J. Bokem, more known for his DJing than his musical endeavors, Drum and bass relies, as the name so subtly tells us, on the beats and rhythms of electronic music and lays a minimal melody down. Similar to jungle, but a bit tamer and more laid back, D and B falls very much into the category of music of the future. Whether or not, we'll be listening to this in five, or even two, years, is another story. This comp brings together the small group of talented producers and musicians making this music and compiles the best tracks into a double release, much like Industrial Fucking Strength, but a few years before the peak of the sub-genre. [anon_devi]



Various Artists
New Life: 15 Years of Electronic Lust
New Life Magazine and C.O.P. Int.
Sort of a "Best of" for the Eighties electro-club scene.

Listening to this, I remember why I got into this kind of music in the first place. It was a vibrant time of experimenting and just being aggressive while using/abusing technology. Some of the bands on here might resemble each other, but there isn't any of the rigid segregation that is going on in new electronic music today. Skinny Puppy sounds as dissimilar to Chris and Cosey as they do to Psyche and Laibach, but they all represented a time of newness and excitement that rivaled punk, but would never make it to the popularity levels that punk did (no complaints here), until Al Jourgenson (Ministry) and, in Canada, Don Gordon (Numb), would pick up guitars back around 1986. New Life is a magazine that, for thirteen years, has covered electronic music from Depeche Mode to Download. This is available only as an import via C.O.P.'s mail-order due to some legal crap over copyright. [Andy Waggoner]



Various Artists
Nocturne Concrete
Unit Circle Rekkids
This CD is a treasure trove of little-known bands. Well, they are little-known to me. This is a compilation of bands that

are on the Unit Circle Rekkids label. They range from the droning, beautiful ambience of Tinty Music and Lifesaver Laboratories, to simple, gorgeous swirls of guitar music from Fear of Dolls, The Rotary Fields, and Vassily. Each of the bands on the compilation has a contact address, or you could probably write to Unit Circle Rekkids to find out more about them. My favorite song is entitled "Sound of Thorns," by Fear of Dolls. This song has an edgy quality, that I can't quite put my finger on. It makes me nervous, but at the same time, it sends shivers down my spine. It is kind of gothic sounding, with guitar work that sounds slightly out of tune, but that only adds to the edgy quality I mentioned earlier. So contact Unit Circle Rekkids, and support some smaller bands. You won't regret it. Other bands on the compilation are: Bill Horist, Rich Hinklin, Interference Pattern, The Garden, Trance, Trachring, and Intonarumori. [Jeff Ernst]
(Unit Circle Rekkids, PO Box 20352, Seattle, WA 98102 USA)



Various Artists
Outer Space Communication Disturbance/Minus Habens Records
This is the third in a series of compilations that investigate new and unusual electronic

creations. The music contained on this disc travels the road from ambient to dance music and back. A refreshing mix of nifty toe-tapping tunes and soft dreamy soundscapes that can put you to sleep. The overall mood of this collection is mystical and unassuming. There is not one overbearing guitar to grate on your nerves, instead, you are soothed by New Age-esque synths that will soothe even the most tense person. A3000, It, Frankie Bit, and Astral Body are representatives from the more

upbeat electronic world. They are propelled by a quickened pace, but not necessarily a heavy beat. Blue Environment comes from the semi-aware New Age arena. Complete with chirping birds and roaming synth, this will tantalize any Ray Lynch follower and sedate the rest of the public. Xyrex, Pulse Code Modulation, and Sw@nild@ fill in the holes between the styles mentioned above. There is a thorough coverage of this small corner of the electronic world, so feel free to explore. [Dave Henderson]



Various Artists
Remix Wars 1, 2 & 3
Strikes 1 & 3 - 21st Circuitry/Offbeat Records
Strike 2 - Cleopatra/Offbeat Records

The concept behind the Remix Wars series of CDs is to pit two bands in the control room of whatever studio the respective labels can afford. Two bands per disc, each remixing three songs by the other band. Good idea, but the result is somewhat less than amazing. I like how μ-siq remixed the Auteurs on a 1995 release because of the dissimilarity of the two artists. If the creators of the Remix Wars had chosen bands from separate camps to remix each other, the audience would have doubled and I think the resulting mixtures would have been more interesting. As it stands, they lack what it takes to really stand out beyond simply yet another remix EP at a full length price by some interesting bands who fall distinctly in the same camp; electro post-industrial. Strike one featured :wumpscut: vs. haujobb, strike two Front Line Assembly vs. Die Krupps and strike three 16 Volt vs. Hate Dept. [anon_devi]



Various Artists
Suck Taste Spit
Machinery Records
This compilation from Dynamica is a nice little sampler of Cubanate, Oomph!, and Think About Mutation. Each band

has a different take on electronic music, so they have a little niche all to themselves on this release. Cubanate represents the catchy ebm/techno-ish dance side of electronic music. They employ a healthy mix of guitar samples and techno beats that will be sure to please people from all areas of the electronic spectrum. They don't have anything incredibly innovative to offer, but that's not a bad thing. They are good at what they do, and deserve your attention. Think About Mutation takes the techno ideal to the extreme with a more aggressive sound than Cubanate, but what they have gained in aggressiveness is lost in lyrical ability. Repetition of the term "motorrazor" throughout the multiple mixes of the song becomes very annoying. KMFDM makes an art of redundancy, and Underworld makes even the most meaningless phrases come alive, but Think About Mutation comes nowhere close to either of these powerful groups. A bit more brushing up on the lyrics, then they might get somewhere. Oomph! bring up the heavy metal side of electronic music, and from their offering on this compilation, they are decent. "Ice Coffin" is the most outstanding track of their five that are present. It has all the makings of a

good heavy metal song, and even a catchy chorus. "Asshole" is plain annoying, nothing more needs to be said about that song. They use the heavy hitting guitar chords along the lines of Skrew or any other electro-metal artist, so if that is what you like, then look here. Otherwise, you might want to stick with Cubanate, they are by far the most outstanding band among the three on Suck, Taste, Spit. [Dave Henderson]



Venus Walk
Side Effect
Bent Productions
Female vox over harsh synth music in the vein of Collide, but on a much more self-produced level. A bit timid when

it comes to quality, yet never losing the indie-vibe, Venus Walk will appeal to fans of underground electro looking for a somewhat new twist to their listening collection. Venus Walk will definitely falter under the waves that the much more talented Collide are making, but there is plenty here to cherish. [anon_devi]

(Bent Productions, P.O. Box 282073, San Francisco, CA 94128 USA)



X Marks the Pedwalk
Meshwork
Cleopatra/Zoth Ommog Records
Sevren Ni-Arb (brain nerves) is one of the busiest musicians in the European scene, with several side-projects and various

outings producing fellow ebm bands. But where he got it all started was in X Marks the Pedwalk. Meshwork finds the band going into a bit more straight ahead and less abrasive dance realms than on previous outings. In my opinion, if a band is going to go soft and, in the process, find a sound that combines the best of eighties and nineties dance, both techno and ebm, I say let 'em. Yes, this album is much tamer than other X Marks albums, which had gained them the title of Germany's answer to Skinny Puppy, it still is an amazing album, one that remains listenable and exciting even on the tenth listen. That's a rarity in electronic music of the nineties. From the vocoded vocals on "Monomaniac" to the hard trance on "Free and Alive" mixed with the synth purity throughout the album, X Marks never falls into the pitfall of thinking adding guitars into the mix is a must. Highly recommended. [Andy Waggoner]



Witchcraft
As I Hide
Blue Triangle Records
Witchcraft has been getting some airplay on New Age radio, more for the fact that finding a format for this might

be a bit difficult outside of an eclectic college radio program than that they fall into the Kenny G camp at all. Shifting between cheesy SFX and intricate synth work, Witchcraft touch on ambient and New Age, but in a way that doesn't really fully fall into either camp. Comparable to Violet Arcana (Zoth Ommog) from early 1995, this debut by Witchcraft is much better produced and more accessible than Violet Arcana. Where VA tended towards trancy

drones and trip-hop beats, Witchcraft relies on more intricate song writing and strong use of the studio for effect. [Andy Waggoner]

magazines

all magazine reviews by Andy Waggoner



Flipside magazine

Punk rock, tons better and less pretentious than MRR, but without forsaking new bands in the slightest. Being around 100 (!) issues should put Flipside as one of the most popular and notorious music magazines, but unfortunately, a

strict adherence to DIY attitude and the indie scene in general, has kept this rag the jewel of a large handful of converts.



Indy magazine

When it comes to independent comic books and info on them, look no further than Indy magazine. Cut in a handy 6"x9" format makes mylar storage an easy option for these informative and good looking mags on the comic book scene. Based

out of Florida, this magazine is put out by someone who also runs a comic book store, which could easily put them in good with the majors. But a love of creative freedom and lots of contacts, Indy magazine is the b&w comic fan's dream.

(Indy magazine, 611 NW 34th Drive, Gainesville, FL 32607; \$2.95 single issues, \$13 for 6 issue subscriptions)



Culture Shock magazine

This new (this is the second issue) magazine from NJ packs more wallops in their new release section than most magazines (interface included) do in an entire issue, when it comes to the wealth of information. For those of us that are a bit disappointed in the American electro scene, look no further than Culture Shock for intelligent and heart-felt reviews and interviews with artists from Europe, and even a few stateside ones, as well. On the graphic side, it is so nice to see a magazine look this good and still keep a strong grasp on the indie post-industrial and ebm scene, without too many forays into metal cross-over bands.

(Culture Shock magazine, 218 Prospect Ave., suite 2a, Hackensack, NJ 07601 USA; \$3.50 for single issues)



DAMn magazine

With a production schedule that rivals Swiss clockwork, DAMn, the magazine that represents the Megalopolis music scene (basically New England down to DC), sure makes me green with envy. This free magazine (plus postage of course) is one that is giving a steady flow of a minimal package, but that may be just perfect for a magazine that comes out near monthly that covers the indie electronic scene. Keeping informed and covering only the best bands might make it a challenge to come up with more info. Did that come out right? I hope so. Basically, DAMn is a bit slim, but that may be all there is worth covering within a month. There, I think that says it better. (DAMn! magazine, 5 Franklin Blvd., Somerset, NJ 08873 USA; \$1 for single issues)



Cyberlogue magazine

With a dedication to post-industrial and underground electro bands like few others have, especially the American scene, Cyberlogue gears itself more at people in the know, but, as with other magazines that lend themselves to the

trade, insider info never hurt the average Joe. Picking up on the next new thing and giving credit where credit is due is what the Cyberlogue, which touts itself as, "your underground guide to rivet head culture," is all about. And I hear they just picked up a slick new cover artist. (Cyberlogue magazine, c/o Rik Millhouse, 3443 Crescent Street, Suite 3-5, Long Island, NY 11106 USA; \$2 for single issues, \$8 for 4 issue subscriptions)



Video Junkie magazine

Covering a lot of the direct to video market and those "limited edition laser discs" that seem to be on everyone's mouth, you know, the ones with additional footage and an interview with the director's mom? With long, insightful, yet dedicated articles on various directors, movie

and production house, from Tobe Hooper (Poltergeist, Lifeforce) to the Hammer Film Company, Video Junkie is worth picking up just for the indepth and heartfelt articles.

(Video Junkie magazine, P.O. Box 4051, Ventura, CA 93007 USA; \$6+\$2.50 shipping for single issues, \$24 with first class shipping for 4 issue subscriptions)



Under the Flag magazine

This free magazine from Belgium is a bit slim on content (8 pages), but with a glossy black and white format, UTF makes up in appearance for what they lack in content. Within this little mag is still several interviews (Collide &

Acumen) and a couple of pages of reviews. Not bad, but I wish, as this is from Europe, they would have covered more European bands.

(Under the Flag magazine, attn. Didier Delhez, rue de Selys 9/3, 4000 Liege, Belgium email: ddh@skynet.be; send IRC for issue)



Outburn magazine

The first issue of a magazine is always the hardest and when your first issue looks this good, it's quite an impressive feat. It's especially impressive when it's just two people doing the magazine; Octavia handles

the writing and rodent EK handles the layout. The layout is interesting and well-done, but at times, the q&a interviews often aren't edited down much from when they were first broadcast on the radio show that Octavia, who is also DJ who post her playlists from her show, In the Temple, regularly to usenet groups like rmi.



Plazm magazine

With a design sense that rivals Raygun without the overdose of mainstream rock and roll crap, Plazm's obscurity is a real treasure to this elitist, but the magazine is just one facet to Plazm Media Group. Also known for their fonts that

are push the edge of readability and are far from bland, Plazm fonts are all available for sale, Plazm makes a great coffee table magazine not only for the excellent design, but also for the lack of pretension in the journalism and criticism. Also worth seeking out for as an art magazine that covers more than just visual, 2-d art, but covers art from the viewpoint of the art student as well as the professional.

(Plazm Media Cooperative, P.O. Box 2863, Portland, OR 97208-2863 USA; \$4.49 for single issues, \$16 for one year subscriptions; 800.524.4944 for VISA or Mastercard orders)

we review all sorts of things pertaining to electronic music and art; CD-ROMs, audio CDs, vinyl, videos, hardware, software, books and video games. If you have anything you would like reviewed in interface, please send it to:

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RADYRAG

electronic body music



Abscess

Journey

Glasnost Records

Abscess are back with the follow-up to In Your Mind, their phenomenal 1995 debut that shook the very foundations of

the electro underworld. This time, without any assistance from Sevren Ni-Arb, they're gonna raze what's left. Journey is a mind-warping, psychotic excursion through the dark, twisted realms of the sub-conscious, with Abscess at the controls. Should you choose to venture with them, you'd better wear a helmet. Layer upon layer, Jan and Sunny spin an intricate web of harsh groove dementia that will open your mind and pack the floor. They exhibit skill and elegance far beyond their years, and could go blow for blow with anything else Europe has to offer. With killers like "Vicious Cover" and "Secret Of Resurrection," Abscess are blazing the trail (and the dancefloor) for countless others to follow. While you're waiting for the new Haujobb, take a trip with Abscess for your ambient electro fix. [sage]

(Glasnost, Glockengießerwall 17, D-20095 Hamburg, Germany)



Cobalt 60
elemental

Edel America Records

This new band with Jean Luc De Meyer on vox has been called "Cyber-tec Part 2," in reference to the project from England

that De Meyer has been involved with. What Cobalt 60 is, to be more accurate, is De Meyer's new band, not a project he is merely involved in. Cobalt 60 is aggressive and powerful ebm with amazing vocals as only De Meyer can provide, along the lines of Cyber-tec, but not as minimal as the EP that Cyber-tec released last year. The synth and beat work by Dominique Lallement lays down a solid foundation for one of the best singers in electronic dance music to date. The music is fast, with a driving, infectious beat, primed for the dancefloor, while the melody is punchy synth work. "If I Was," one of the stand-out tracks for me, has De Meyer in a mood that has been set by his recent break-up with his girlfriend (see interview this issue), which seems to have had an effect on his song-writing, as evidenced in a number of songs on elemental. [anon_devi]

(Edel America Records, 729 7th Avenue, NY, NY 10019 USA)



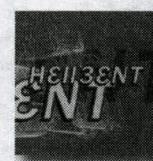
Crocodile Shop
Crush Your Enemies

Tinman Records

Crocodile Shop, New Jersey's premier electronic artists and area veterans, throw us a little meat to tide us over until

their new full length, Beneath, is available. Crush is a diverse array of remixes from their previous album, Celebrate the Enemy, that run the gamut from trance techno and deep house, to full-on electro and stomping industrial anthems. No "big names™"; no hype; mostly just the skillful hands of Mick Hale, proving that CS are about anything but boundaries. The remixes display the boys' incredible proficiency outside of the standard mold of Crocodile Shop, while retaining their signature sound. This is Croc Shop's most profound and mature work to date. With any luck, Mick's new side project (Division #9) will continue along this path. You may not dig every mix, but chances are, at least a few of them will get your gears grinding. [sage]

(Tinman Records, P.O. Box 1114, New Brunswick, NJ 08903-1114 USA)



Hellbent

o.01

Fifth Column Records

Hellbent is really the work of Bryan Black of haloblock and Eric Powell of 16 Volt with Jordon Nogood of Nogood

Design. Jared Hendrickson of Chemlab does vocals on one song ("Sleeper"), Charles Levi of Thrill Kill Kult plays bass on most of the album and Dylan Moore, also of Chemlab provides a short noise suture. The result of this mixture is exactly what you might think it would sound like, with haloblock's and 16 Volt's styles showing through the most. Hellbent's minimal techno groove is really addictive with the song "Chromed" sticking out as being the most potential club classic with its blippy synth line and a chorus that practically spells out how cool it is. o.01 is a tasty treat, but eats more like a snack, clocking in at under 36 minutes. There are singles longer than this. Yet another attempt to sell an EP as a full length, Pailhead's Trait (Wax Trax!) has enjoyed longevity that o.01 has the potential to, if only it were presented appropriately. [anon_devi]



Think Tank

Skullbuggery

Hakatak Records

Paul Robb of Information Society, the wonderman who created such awesome tracks as "Seek 2000" and "Hack" is

back with a drop-dead amazing album. A genius of sampling and beat tracking, Robb's contributions were the heavy side, not the silly side, to InSoC. For those of those who wanted more of this side to come out, the wait is over. With a mostly instrumental album, relying instead on the samples to speak their wisdom with wit & humor, Think Tank

provides a number of excellent dance tracks. Along with the 12" single for "Screen" has 5 remixes, including one by Minneapolis cohorts, haloblock, there are plenty of tracks on here for any club DJ to slid into rotation. A bit funky at times and a bit straight ahead aggressive ebm at others, Skullbuggery is one of the top picks for me. Tired of half-ass song writing and weak production? Get Think Tank. [Andy Waggoner]



Kebabtraume

Neural Earthquake

Minus Habens Records

This is some great dark electro-dance from Italy. Kebabträume is a multimedia collective that has been active

since 1988 in different incarnations, the current one having formed in 1993. Effectively incorporating elements of ebm, techno, industrial and Trance, this is a well-rounded, well-focused album, sure to please fans of all these genres. I would especially direct fans of any Leeb/Fulber project, Front 242 and Young Gods to this album. My favorite track is "War/Distortion," featuring beautiful, trancy synths, heavily effected vocals, and various wartime noises and distorted samples flowing through the background. "Rise!" and "Dark Room" are harder, more aggressive track, sure to fill the dancefloor. Though a bit less aggressive, "Real Faith" and "Immortal Spirit" scream dancefloor hit as well. "Cybergod" is a bouncy, technotrance instrumental piece. Closing the album is the "New Skin" remix of "D.O.C.S.", the original version of which appeared on the compilation Body Frequencies, also on Minus Habens. [Veronica Kirchoff]



Various Artists

Electronic Youth Vol. 4

Music Research Records

A collection of up and coming electronic bands from Europe. A few of the bands we've seen recently on other comps, such

as Stiff Miners and Brain Leisure, but most are new to me. Riding the line between retro 80's club music ala 242 or FLA and progressive new ebm, this series of new bands, put together by Torben Schmidt of New Life magazine, is a great way to get an idea of what's going on in the European scene in this vein of music. If you are into the kind of music that Zoth Ommog releases and want some new bands to pick up, this is the CD to pick up. On the most promising bands on here is blank and blank, while bands like blank leave a bit to be desired. blank's "blank" is a good song, as well. [anon_devi]

CORROSION

electro-metal



Think About Mutation
Hellraver

Dynamica/Noise Records

Think About Mutation's electro-metal cum ebm sound is a bit jagged when compared to other bands like Cubanate or

FLA on first listen. But when you sit down and listen to this album, it really is great! Going from thrash to hard ebm in one song, and then jungle on "The Rewinding Seeds," And then, just when you least expect it, TAM kick in with a all live track that's a real shit-kicker ("Nude"). TAM have one of the most diverse sounds of any new band. With equal parts metal (sometimes really cheesy metal) and techno (again, sometimes really cheesy techno), TAM still manage to kick out some great tracks. Much more interesting and loose than Die Krupps or even Testify at times, Think About Mutation will appeal to those who've almost outgrown the teen angst thing, but still need some hard, yet still somewhat progressive music. With melodic vocals highlighting the thrash screams, and poppy techno dance beats peaking around the harsh ebm beats, you can't say TAM don't at least try to be interesting and, luckily, they are talented enough to pull it off. [David Sexton]



Acumen
Territory=Universe
Fifth Column Records

Acumen return from what I felt was a disappointing remastering of their debut album to an explosive sophomore release

that reaffirms my faith in the band. Musically the band seems to have dealt with the fact that the guitar were mixed rather heavily into the mix of their previous album and have gone out of their way to rectify the situation. No single facet of this album drowns out any other which does marvels for the overall crispness of the album. A large portion of this quite probably stems from the fact that the bands own guitarist, Jamie Duffy, engineered the album at Chicago Trax. Ever present on the album are the usual Acumen hip-hop funk sensibilities and wise cracking lyrics that the fans have grown to know and love. As a band Acumen have become extremely tight musically, have learned from their previous oversights, and have now solidified into a premier Coldwave band which is more than evident by the concise manner in which this album has been constructed. Also present on the album is a multimedia track. Included on the CD-ROM track are the lyrics to "Mike," which was originally released on the Fifth Column, Forced Cranial Removal sampler, as well as several audio snippets

from various tracks on the album with rather wild full-motion graphics. [Jester]

(Fifth Column Records, P.O. Box 787, Ben Franklin Station, Washington D.C. 20044 USA)



Godflesh
songs of love and hate

Earache Records

The work of Godflesh has always been a testimony to the beauty of a band oblivious to trends, and unconcerned with courting any particular audience or scene. The inclusion of the Sorrono photograph in the sleeve of the CD couldn't be more appropriate. Like the artist, the music hits hard as an affront to convention, yet radiates in the purity of its vision. Songs of Love and Hate draw reference points as broad as Morbid Angel and Coil, but ultimately transcend any genre classification. This is a band that "found itself."

Excellent production and brilliantly textured soundscapes. A miraculous offering for those who prefer it thick and loud. [David Baum]

(Earache Records, 295 Lafayette St., suite 915, NY, NY 10013 USA)



KMFDM

Xtort

TVT Records

Having not put out an album that has really blown me away since Naive or maybe Money, I had pretty much given up on KMFDM. Then along comes Xtort. It's like refining KMFDM. The addition of Chris Connelly and Bill Rieflin really make this album.

"Craze," with Connelly on vocals, harkens to Revco and maybe 1000 Homo DJs' "Apathy" or "Better Ways," had Connelly sung on these, shoved through the KMFDM money machine. Rieflin's drumming toward the end of the album reminds us who is the master of electronic drumming. Nicole Blackman, whose poignant spoken word rant on the Nihil club tour inspired some and confused others, gives us "Dogma," an intense lyrical oration. Xtort isn't the best album in this genre or by KMFDM, but it's so great to have a KMFDM CD this good again. Sascha has taken all of his "conceptual continuity"; the political edge, the self-mocking, the hard-beat electro vibe and metal guitars, along with 10+ years of experience and brought everything into focus. The toned down guitars on Xtort are a long time coming, but in doing so, KMFDM hasn't suffered or lost anything. In fact, I feel the have recaptured the perfect mix they had when I first heard them years ago. [Andy Waggoner]



Testify
MM MYA OOOO

Van Richter Records

One of the best electro-metal albums of recent by a band only started as a side-project from the Fair Sex. Produced

by Skrew, fans of thrash and metal, ala Ministry Psalm 69 or Kreator, should check out Testify. For a country known more for dancefloor music, which the Fair Sex is, Germany's Testify cranks up the Marshalls and churns out some heavy and stylized shit. While Testify isn't redneck metal by any means, they are heavy enough to satisfy even the most diligent metal fan, while keeping a foot in the electro scene, with sequencers and samples adding to the mayhem. This, their second full length release, shows them at a good point in their career and being in Germany may keep them at an accessible level (translation: you won't have to worry about MTV overplaying this). [David Sexton]



Sköld
s/t

RCA Records

I know, I know. Major label band. It's gotta suck, right? Well, while this is definitely mainstream and straight-ahead, Sköld really isn't all that bad. It's kind of cool, actually. While I don't think it's going to break like Marilyn Manson or Stabbing Westward did (even though after listening to the demos for both of these bands, I said the same thing and look at them now), it is still something polished and slick

will being pretty harsh and a teeny bit rebellious. Kind of like a William Gibson or Poppy Z. Brite, they're popular, but their books are great, so who cares? Tim Sköld, the main man behind the band that bears his name has a rather unimpressive past in Shotgun Messiah. I don't really remember this band, but I'm told that they sucked. Anyway, you'd never know that from this album. Using industry standards, Mark Walk, Howie Beno and Cybersank, Sköld ends up with a potent, if shallow album. Reminiscent of Armageddon Dildoes' Lost, with punctuated guitars and pop lyrics. Like a good night drinking, you feel cheap and conforming, but you had a good time so fuck it. With nothing new in the way of style; noisy electronics, rock drums, rock drums and misanthropic, adolescent lyrics, you can't say Sköld is going to go in history for paving new ground or breaking a new genre into the main stream. You might say that he [David Sexton]

IN PIECES

esoteric, noise and experimental music



Brighter Death Now
Innerwar
Relapse Entertainment/Cold
Meat Industry
Filed under the "Uneasy Listening" series of noise oriented releases, this album is far

from unaccessible. Composed of feedback, distortion, and samples, it flows smoothly from one track to another in a soothing but abrasive nature. Very similar to Namanax, Brighter Death Now utilizes a loose structure with their music that is characterized by manipulating primarily low tones of distortion, interjected with high pitches. This style is not unique only to BDN, but they are very good at their art. One of the most outstanding aspects of this work is the expression of emotion through music without cumbersome lyrics. "Little Baby" and "American Tale" are the two tracks that successfully tug at the listeners emotional strings. "Little Baby" creates an uncomfortable feeling through one girl's account of being molested by her father. Accompanied by a low growl of electronics that later overwhelm the recollections, the unpleasant nature of the story is matched beautifully by the unpleasant nature of the music. "American Tale" has a subtle hum that cycles under the sporadic distorted announcements that are displaced by a crowd chanting, "I hate you." The actual substance of the song is minimal, but effective. The music on this CD covers the spectrum of minimalistic rumbling to overpowering feedback, and it all works together perfectly. Coupled with great packaging, this CD is really worth taking the time to investigate further. [Dave Henderson]

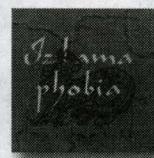


Crash Worship
Asesinos
ROIR
Originally released in England on Cold Spring Records in 1992, ROIR has been kind enough to pick Asesinos up

and re-release it for the U.S. The only differences are the packaging (the new release is not as colorful as the original), the addition of a short biography, and a slightly altered track listing. In both cases, this CD collects tracks previously released between 1987 and 1989. Percussion has always been the focus of Crash Worship, and this disc reveals a few of the many sides to their work over the years. There are few lyrics, if any, to accompany the songs, and additional instruments are secondary to the drumming. The first few tracks on the disc were taken from the first cassette release from 1987. These tracks are much more hypnotic and subdued than later live material. Not that they are any less appealing, but they seem to be more appropriate for a relaxed state of mind with their soothing repetition and calming nature. Contrasted to this, the final track,

"Phoenix Ixtasis" provides an idea as to what their current live sound is like. It is a bit more harsh and noisy, and aggressively commands your attention. As the CD progresses, the approaches to percussion change and create a logical progression of themes from the opening tracks to the closing track. Considering the minuscule nature of the Crash Worship Discography, this CD does a world of good by bringing back some of the better songs that were widely unavailable due to the original releases being very limited. In addition, more people will have the opportunity to be exposed to this incredible and unique band. [Dave Henderson]

(Reachout International Records, 611 Broadway, Suite 411, NY, NY 10012 USA)



Muslimgauze
Izlamaphobia

I have always considered Muslimgauze and Esplendor Geometrico to be similar in song construction, the only difference is that the

Muslimgauze have always been partial to using more traditional instruments in which to create their unique and mesmerizing style of percussive music, as opposed to Esplendor Geometrico who have done much the same with electronic sound manipulation. With the release of this beautiful double CD, that distinction no longer is applicable. Bryn Jones still sticks with the orientation of middle eastern inspired music, but he has now employed the use of distortion and electronic manipulation to breathe new life into his hypnotic rhythms and breathtaking beats. A similar use of electronics was present on Blue Mosque and Zealot, but in neither case were they taken to the extreme that they are on Izlamaphobia. As with every other release, his political views are unmistakable despite the lack of lyrics to any of the songs. There is no question that this is one double CD set that will be cherished by ALL people who appreciate the Muslimgauze, yet its appeal can spread to those who have not yet been exposed to this wonderful type of musical expression. (If you haven't picked up this release yet, you better do so quickly; there are only 600 copies available.) [Dave Henderson]



Sirvix
Her Dead Love
Feedback/Decibel Records
A characteristic of popular music is its easily digestible format and lyrical content. Recycled styles and concepts

are embraced because they are familiar and time has shown that this is one of the best ways to boost sales. In addition, very little thought or imagination is expected of the listener because it is known that

these are time-tested formulas that will be consumed. Sirvix asks a little more of its listeners than to take their work at face value. Their songs have incredible depth that drag the listener in and encourage questions rather than acceptance. It is not a melody or driving beat that can capture your attention, for neither exist for the majority of this release; rather, it is the curiosity of what the creators want you to envision. "The Dark Tide" paints a bleak picture with its ominous recollection of memories accompanied by a pounding drum and subtle synth. Slowly, this track melts into the next with the sound of waves that are overtaken by feedback and screams. An utter landscape of noise that works to stimulate a variety of mental images. As the tracks progress on the disc, there is a logical evolution of sound and noise within works. Rather than being called songs, the divisions are more like movements of a larger body. With a very eerie similarity to C.W. Vrtacek's work on Days of Grace, "Lethe" comes forth at a trotting pace and offers you a variety of sounds and samples that seem to create a whimsical interlude in the middle of the disc. The second half of the CD still has the dark soundscape quality of the first half, but the songs become a bit more structured. In a very distorted way, you can almost see a similarity between "Voices" and Laibach's "Panorama". It is not easy to label Sirvix's style, so I won't. All I can say is their music insists upon the participation of the listener to fully realize the immensity of their world. Her Dead Love is music for the imagination and should not be overlooked. [Dave Henderson]



Test Department
Ecstasy Under Duress
ROIR
Industrial percussion from these demented originators. This was a live recording from 1984 that brings Test Department's roots to the bright light. While Test Dept. has recently gone onto dance and synth realms, early works were beat heavy and very subversive, like Einstuerzende Neubauten meets Crash Worship. Male bonding to an extreme with sweaty men banging on metal and screaming disenfranchised musings into a fuzz-box. Political and biting, Test Department have lost a lot of their edge and this album brings back a lot of that aggression to a new generation of experimenters. Very highly recommended for those of you who accidentally picked up Cleopatra's release of the last Test Dept. album based on the band's notoriety. This is the Test Dept. everyone talks about. This will hold us off until we get the verdict on the new album out on Invisible and the follow-up tour with Sheep on Drugs late this fall. [Andy Waggoner]

FEEDBACK SIGNALS

ambient and techno



Monomorph
Subject to Electronic Control
Minus Habens Records

Italy's Monomorph create deep cyber-ambient that will lull you into a trance and clobber you over the head

with its style. Very cool and very well-done, Monomorph show most bedroom ambient musicians that you still have to create music that others will enjoy. They are fully aware of this and with analog artillery, Monomorph dive into depths of sonic architecture. Walls of pulsing noises and washes of sound fill the halls of this CD. Soothing, but never to the point of sleep. [anon_devi]



B-12
Time Tourist
Warp/TVT Records

Remember way back in the days of electro-soma, sippin' on a coolio under a warm mediterranean sun? The

choons glistened with a futuristic flamenco style, laced with a spackling of ritmo latino. Those delicatesans offered by Artificial Intelligence [Warp/WaxTrax!] became essential to most any beach party, though B-12 seemed to be lost in the glare of antiquity. And now, after a two century hiatus, B-12 systems again glistens into the present as a twenty-third century time tourist. But what of it? Is the music any different from its twentieth century ancestors? A disappointing "no" stifles the continuum. The law of chronology dictates that progress moves forward with time. As the ever-present allusion of futuristic/tekno [sic] music manifests, one expects a highly experimental piece well beyond the contemporary electronic movement. Yet Time Tourist returns with an array of rather similar tracks resonating with post vogue ambient synth sounds. Tracks begin with said ambient, 3-D aural stimulus, as the trademark B-12 high frequency melody works its way into the network. What redeems Time Tourist from the chasm of clichés is the integration of sophisticated rhythms into the songs. Though offering traditional snares and hats, subtle and decent sequencing make the rhythms stand out. Not to say that the remainder doesn't have merit; Time Tourist is decent listening music. But it lacks in advertised innovation, greatly reducing its aesthetics. [Brian Rowe]

(Warp Records, Studio 2, 1 Brown Street, Sheffield S51 2BS UK; TVT Records, 23 E. 4th Street, 3rd floor, New York, NY 10003 USA)



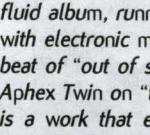
T.H.C.
Death by Design
Fifth Column Records

Hardcore techno from an electro outlook. Plenty of samples and hard beats to wet the palette of even the most dance

floor trodden youth. Includes the track from 21st Circuitry's Death Rave 2010, "Directly From Satan." Electronic music as innovative as one could expect from ex-members of Stereotaxic Device. Very fast and harsh, T.H.C., which stands for "The Hard Corps," breaks limits with lots of high BPMs, and as with most FCR releases, a mistake in the cover layout, at least I hope it's a mistake. With no BPM listing for tracks, it'll miss out in a sorely needed market; the crossover club DJ. [anon_devi]



era vulgaris
Disturbance/Minus Habens Records
it is the brainchild of Ivan Lusco, the man who I believe also runs Minus Habens. era vulgaris is a very dynamic and fluid album, running the gamut of what is what in with electronic music today. From the solid dance beat of "out of sight" to the squealing synths ala Aphex Twin on "temporary irritation," era vulgaris is a work that encompasses years of turmoil (5 years in the studio) and inspiration. It is intense at points, while being wonderfully subdued at others. There is enough here for almost any fan of electronic music to find interest in. Dynamics play a key role in this album and doing so has helped this album stand strong in the sea of new electronic artists. [Andy Waggoner]



M.E.S.T.

Matter-Energy-Space-Time
Dwell Records

A free swirling portal spirals through some distant worm hole towards spiritual awakening. The seeds of consciousness

ebb against a primordial ooze as Matter-Energy-Space-Time distorts perception through razed paths. A small blotch of grainy paper unfolds the gateway wherein MEST awaits. Psychedelic ambience conjures wisps of elementary science glowing of astral perception; a vertigo-laden observer is swallowed into the chronic currents washing away any resemblance to reality. Before being totally immersed in this acid gilded fortune, the journey quickly detours to a 4-4 time signature, despite warnings of alien terrain. Fueled with hats galore, they loop against waves of altered melodies.

Purported to assist in the grand unification, MEST falls short of the Yin and Yang. Tending towards electric sheep and synthetic trips, MEST delivers a twice soaked prosthetic hand shake, far from the indigenous allusions of nahuatl descent. Rather, the tiny acid wiggles propel through a divergent trance tunnel, wavering between the silliness of a crystal plated Naked Gun and a powdered list of Schindler's accord. The fluctuations inspire a bipolar schizophrenia with disjointed origins of lost duality. Possibly a restructuring of the album might produce an improved trip, one that progresses with better cohesion. [Brian Rowe]

(Dwell Records, P.O. Box 39439, San Francisco, CA 90039 USA)

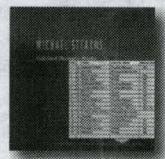


DJ Spooky
Songs of a Dead Dreamer
Asphodel Records

DJ Spooky calls on the gods of the turntable to create an album as esoteric and enigmatic as its creator. It's as though DJ Spooky is only a messenger through

which the true meanings of the music he samples and mixes in really comes through. Take the appropriation mentality of MONDO 2000 and combine that with the style of a New York club kid/DJ and you've got DJ Spooky. Very talented and in a class all his own, Spooky will turn more than a few heads. Flowing and trippy, Songs of a Dead Dreamer is an outstanding album. [Andy Waggoner]

(Asphodel Records, P.O. Box 51, Old Chelsea Station, NY, NY 10113-0051 USA)



Michael Stearns
Collected Thematic Works (1977-1987)
Collected Ambient & Textural Works (1977-1987)

Fathom Records

Taking the true meaning of ambient as defined by Eno, which was music that represents the atmosphere of a place, Michael Stearns' music is most suitable for elevator music on the Enterprise as its giant engines hum and the vacuum of space surrounds you. Not that these are space influenced albums, but like the concept of Star Trek, with its multi-cultural and humanist outlook, Stearns' music is out of time and place. Works as early as 1977 (!) reflect a true adventurer spirit into the calm of ambient and early electronic music. [Andy Waggoner]

interview and photos
by paul seegers

design by pulse code

Mentallo & the Fixer

It is a warm autumn night in Austin Texas. Gary Dassing, a.k.a Mentallo is sitting on the couch in his typical bachelor home. After listening to some CDs and lighting up another cigarette, Mentallo is ready to talk...

I/F: First of all, I have a question from a lady named Mary from the Internet. She wants to know where the name Mentallo and the Fixer came from?

GD: Well, a friend brought (the name) to my attention when we were doing Benestrophe, I liked the sound of it, but I didn't want to use it because I didn't think we were going to do a side project, and we were happy with Benestrophe which was made up of Dwayne, myself and our old vocalist Richard Mendez, but we broke up over a number of reasons, some of those being off the record.

I/F: Still friends?

GD: Oh sure! We always decided that friendships came first and would not let those kinds of things to mess up our friendships. So I did Mentallo and the Fixer in my home in San Antonio by myself for a Portuguese label, but we had some problems with the label, there was no contract, I didn't get paid for along time. New bands have to watch out. I did the first CD (No Rest For The Wicked) for exposure, thought I would get myself out on the international market, and who wouldn't give my position? As a matter of fact the new Metropolis release, Continuum, is stuff recorded from 90 to 93, all early tracks. I don't know how people will react to it. It is not all in your face industrial, as an artist I try to broaden my horizons; kind of a personal thing, but it's not like I'm doing country music or anything like that. But it is part of my character to say I am not this goth doom and gloom character. I have this tension in my life that you hear about in the melodic aspect of my music, but that is not what I am about. So, a friend brought the name up to me and later I found out it was two villains in a comic book.

I/F: Were they two villains that didn't make the grade?

GD: I don't really know, to be honest. It is really touchy, I don't even know what comics they come from. I wouldn't want a lawsuit over our name, and I don't even want to deal with it. I wouldn't want to get sued. It's just that Mentallo sort of represents the writing of the lyrics which I do, and then Dwayne is dubbed the Fixer because he is the electronics technician. Not to say I'm the brains behind the band or anything like that. Just Mentallo and the Fixer. That says it all!

I/F: What inspires you to write?

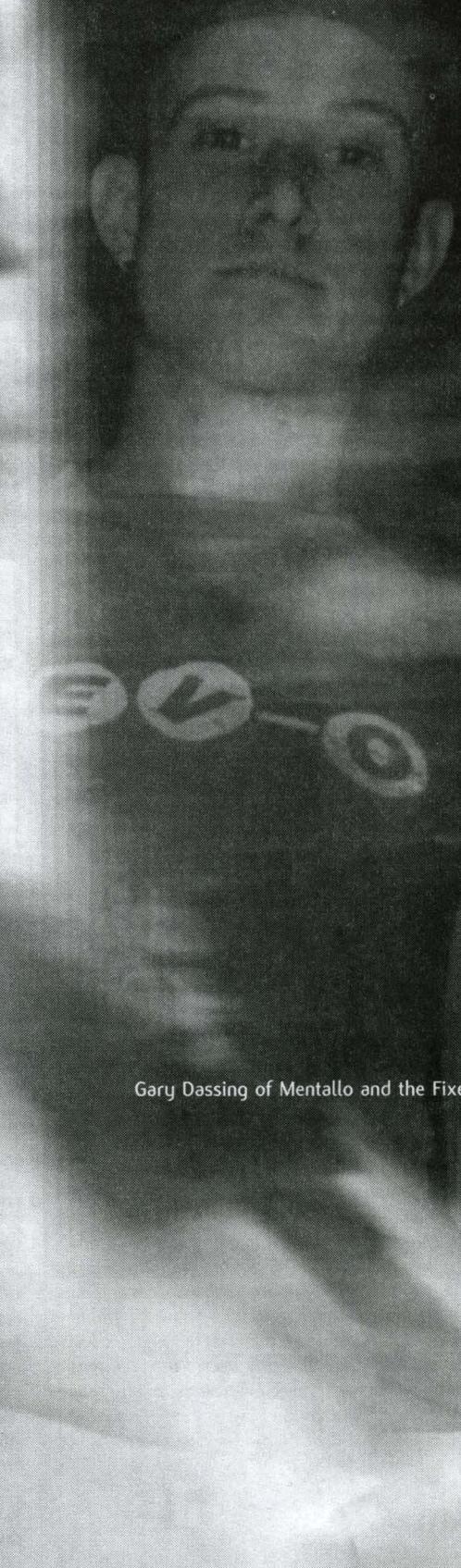
GD: I am inspired by my environment. I try not to watch the news, it is so depressing and it effects me badly, and I can be a bit mentally unstable at times, and it comes out in my music. I will listen to a track and say this is disposable, but sometimes a track will take me back to a time period in my life and I remember what I was thinking and feeling. I don't know how good it was, but at least it was original. I mean, we were the first band in San Antonio to use a computer based sequencer.

I/F: So what does the future hold for the band, by way of new music?

GD: Well, the title of the new Mentallo and the Fixer CD will be called Burnt Beyond Recognition. We had some tracks done, but we just got our new mixer and we will be getting some new stuff so we want to rework them with the new sounds here, and take our time. It will blow away Angels, I have no doubt about it. We are going to take our sweet time on it and not be rushed.

I/F: You did Angels for Zoth Ommog. Did you want to say anything on the record about your now-past relationship with Zoth?

GD: Yes, well I think our problems were the result of a very big communication barrier.



Gary Dassing of Mentallo and the Fixer

I/F: Was it the fact that you guys didn't speak German?

GD: (Laughing) No, I wish it was. It was more an issue of getting paid on time.

I/F: Then tell us about the business end of it.

GD: BE SURE THERE IS CONTRACT. If you don't like what is in the contract, don't sign. If you feel that your music as part of your soul, just think of it as selling your soul. This is really true of overseas labels. With an overseas label, you have no idea what they are doing. You don't know what the promotion is. You demand that. Don't let them make all the demands. On the Zoth Ommog release Mentallo meets Manisthae, they cut five tracks and did not even tell us. It was supposed to be fourteen tracks and sold at an EP price, but they cut it to nine, and the tracks were damn fine tracks. One was a remix of "Sacrilege," another a remix of "Decompose." We worked hard on the DAT master with vocals, and much of the CD was instrumental because they stripped off the vocals. It really pissed us off. Another thing is we never saw our covers, so we did not have much say so over the final product. We are not having that problem with RAS DVA on the Benestrophe stuff.

I/F: So, lawyer?

GD: Get a lawyer, because you cannot hope to sue someone overseas unless you have the money. And your just some twenty year old kid from the U.S. that makes music for them and they don't have to pay you because you don't know the laws, I mean it just sucks to try to sue an overseas label, all the red tape just sucks. Make sure they call you a lot, don't be on your knees to them. Don't give them attitude, but don't kiss their ass. You make demands, don't be like "Praise Talla" - he shits too. Don't be intimidated by people!

I/F: So tell us about relationship with your brother...

GD: That is a first.

I/F: I can't even imagine working so close with a sibling, tell us about the age difference etc.

GD: Dwayne just turned thirty one the other day and I am twenty six. As far as our relationship, it is really based on music. We have different friends and hang out with different people. But we get along OK. We are just different people. There are some musical differences. Dwayne sounds more ebm and mine is a little more experimental.

I/F: What do think of the current industrial scene?

One thing that puzzles me is all the Satanic industrial stuff. I mean, it looks like joke to me, like image. I mean they may be like "Oh mighty Satan" but I feel like that can't even touch me. I mean what right do you have to take the life of an animal. It is a plea for attention. I mean to each his own, but don't force that black pit shit down my throat. I can say the same for some established religions, I mean I am not knocking the Bible but you can find books of rules in all religions. I am interested in Edgar Cayce and Nostradamus. I believe in karma. What is probably going to happen is we are going to piss off some aliens and they are going to fry our planet to a cinder (laughing)...

I/F: What do like to listen to?

GD: I listen to a lot of eighties stuff. New Wave, old Progressive.

I/F: I love old Cure and Depeche Mode. I remember seeing the People are People tour and I thought it sounded hard.

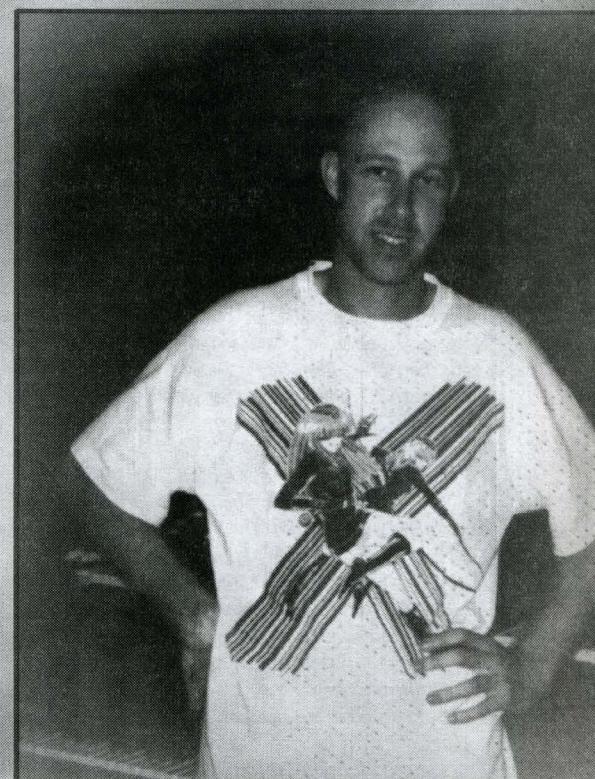
GD: Fuck yeah. When Depeche Mode came out they were fucking industrial sounding. They were the first band to really use samplers to any extent. Fucking Depeche Mode does not get the credit they deserve. I mean, it was bands like them and Rush that used synths that led us to buy our synths.

I/F: I love Rush and ELP, if it weren't for Keith Emerson I would have never bought my Juno 6.

GD: I am not really listening to anyone right now, because I am busy with the Benestrophe stuff, but that is what I like.

I/F: What do you think of marketing, and image?

GD: I remember hearing Trent Reznor say that when you do music for CDs you are no longer just doing it for yourself, but for others. Yeah, that is true, but I am still doing it for me. We are easy going people, we just want to be ourselves. I just do what I do.



Dwayne Dassing of Mentallo and the Fixer

end

orbital

Since Orbital's first club hit, "Chimes," Phil and Paul Hartnoll, two brothers from England, have continued producing some of the most original electronic dance music that suffers neither from an excess of levity or insipidness.

I/F: What is your relationship with Greenpeace? Did they come to you?

PH: Yes, they did. I've been a member for quite a while, but a friend of ours who is very active in Greenpeace put our name to them. They are always looking for publicity to promote Cyrus, this solar energy thing. They rang us last month and said, "We've got this truck and do you want to use it?" We said, "Yeah." That was it basically. We wrote the track and when we were done arranging it, we gave them a ring. They pulled the truck out front and fed a lead into us, and we recorded it using solar energy. After reading their pamphlet about it, these are quite interesting facts and they gave me justification to putting a few facts in there about solar energy and the lack of funding alternative energies have compared to how much money is put into nuclear power, I don't think it is very good. It is very short sighted, I think. I have my doubts and I don't know if this is true, but I think a lot of the nuclear power plants are invented to get the by-products to make nuclear arms. I am sure this is one of those little conspiracy things in my mind. But, in Britain, they just spent one million pounds of taxpayers' money to create a visitors' center for one of these nuclear power stations. They are trying to build up confidence to tell people it is all right. You're telling me that you've got to do that to let me know it is all right? So, the schools will go there and take the monorail around... it's almost like the Simpsons. The Irish sea is a dumping ground; its one of the most radioactive seas going. Just before coming away, there was a guy that just left a nuclear power station and had to sign a secrecy agreement. Why would you have to sign a secrecy agreement if you just work at a power station? Well, he basically broke it and said there have been leakages out into the sea for the past ten years... quite a bit of radioactive waste over the years. Its all about money why they don't do it. Look at countries like Norway. If you want to invest your money into making your house solar powered, they give you grants towards that. They are working towards a cleaner country. That is the attitude that would be nice to adopt.

I/F: With recycling, they decided it was easier to dump waste than actually reusing.

PH: Yeah, and they are chucking it into the sea that they know nothing about. They know nothing about where they are dumping it compared to other parts of the world. They don't know the consequences...its part of our food chain, they don't know what they're doing.

I/F: With Orbital, you don't really force any major political issue.

PH: But it's there because its within us. When you are making music as a form of expression, if you feel quite strongly about a subject, it will be there. I don't like to force my opinion on people, I'd rather show the facts and let them make up their own minds. As an electronic band, we feel a sense of responsibility because of the power with electricity. I think things are beginning to happen. We are doing a festival when we get back to England called "Earth Energy." It is being put on by a commercial company, not like Greenpeace. So commercial companies are beginning to tap in now, and are thinking how to get the message across by doing a festival. So things are starting to happen, not majorly, but people are starting to find out. It will be a while before my kids are my age and start beginning to discover, but you have to force them.

I/F: On a less heavy point, when you guys mix the analog equipment with the MIDI and digital stuff, do you use CV converters or do you sample?

PH: Both really. We have an old Arp 2000, but that is too temperamental to bring out on stage. We sample it and run off noises.

I/F: It goes out of tune doesn't it?

PH: It does a bit.

I/F: You can't patch it can you?

PH: You have to re-route it. We have a 101 and a 303 this runs off. The 101 is a CV gate converter from the box.

I/F: Does the Bass Station has a CV built in?

PH: No, that is MIDI.

I/F: What do you think of the new digitally controlled analogs?

PH: There is a lot of equipment with analog analogs. Tons of analog stuff coming out just like the 70's. Some of the CV gate stuff...some of the cheap ones. Loads of full on not controlled analog synths.

I/F: Oberheim made one didn't they?

PH: Yeah, that was a bit of a failure.

I/F: Do you record to tape or do you just go direct to digital?

PH: When we record, we hire this little room out. All of the gear that we have on tour with us is what we use. We have that in the room and when we record and arrange, we record it straight to DAT. We don't mess about going into a studio and recording it to analog. It keeps with the bedroom ethics and the spontaneity of it. It is a bit more live, so it is good.

I/F: You improvise on stage, but do you improvise when you are writing?

PH: Sometimes. Looking at this album, about 15-20 minutes of it was improvised.

I/F: Into a sequencer?

PH: No, it is like you have the sequencer there and you are improvising and you are muting and muting things. Sometimes with things like "Science Friction," that was just like basic loops worked out and they'll just improvise on top, into the sequencer.

I/F: You don't use very many vocals... but who is "Ante?"

PH: That's Alison Goldfrapp, she didn't want to use her name and she said wanted to be called "Ante". After we had everything printed up, she called and said she changed her mind.

I/F: Did you sample her?

PH: Yeah, she's a friend of ours and she just pops in every now and again. If we have something up and running, she adlibs and we put it on DAT. If we can't use it we'll just put it on the shelf. If another track comes up we will bring it out. Just resample it and mess around with it then.

I/F: Is it odd working with your brother?

PH: No, it is good fun. It is just like when we lived together in our parents house and started collecting bits of gear. We've also moved on and we've got our own lives. If we didn't work together, we wouldn't see each other as much. It's quite



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nice in that respect. It's almost like nothing has changed... apart from our personal situations.

I/F: You don't get into conflicts much?

PH: No, not at all. Of course you have the regular arguments, but we're brothers and you can say, "Fuck off." You don't have to worry about him being your mate and getting offended.

I/F: When did you get into electronic music? Did people like Depeche Mode have a big influence?

PH: Early Depeche Mode and before that, Cabaret Voltaire. Mid-80's electronic figures, new Romantics, etc. All that sort of stuff. When electro kicked in and we thought, "wow". Electric Kingdom, Twilight 22, and Cybertron. We were also into a lot of High Energy at the time, but you couldn't hear it from where we were. We lived in Kent, which is the next county 30 miles south of London. It is the green belt, quite nice. All the people who live there work in London and want a quiet town. So it is quite conservative without much for young people. You end up amusing yourself, so we got into music. We got a drum machine and tried it out. Early hip-hop sort of stuff, not rap. It was all the stuff that they used to send over from the radio from New York. The megamixes, not all the gangster rap bullock stuff. It was just trying to mix the other person. It was all really nice, like Grandmaster Flash. I went over to New York to try and find hip-hop, but soon found out that white English persons wouldn't be so welcome in a rock-a-way hip hop club. I was really innocent. I did come over to try and find out what is going on in the music. The only way I could do it was by taking stuff off the radio and send it back home.

I/F: Do you still carry the harder influence with you?

PH: I think you carry everything with you. Everything you listen to just plods along with you.

I/F: What do you think of the techno scene in England? Do you work with other artists? What is the most impressive thing that has come out there?

PH: That's about four questions there, isn't it? We've played with Underworld quite a bit, they're mates of ours. We do gigs with people, we don't necessarily work with them. We've had this ongoing thing with Underworld from years ago. We were going to swap discs, but we haven't gotten around to that. They've remixed one of our tracks, but we haven't actually gotten together and done anything. That has been the closest we've gotten; playing gigs and doing remixes. We're not all that involved, really. We know people; we meet people; and sometimes we end up somewhere and think, "God, we're in the techno hall of fame." It derives itself from doing things on the mini surface tours, and loads of people getting to know each other. We just end up having loads of friends. Geographically it is so small, even if you come from Edinburgh up in Scotland, and come to London, it is a six hour train ride or a one hour plane ride from one end of the country to another. That is why subcultures happen more in Britain. You have nowhere else to go, you're surrounded by sea.

I/F: Do you get involved in the club scene?

PH: No, not really. We don't. We do draw influences from dance rhythms and beats. We got lumped into that in the beginning because it was a lot more dance oriented and we had one big hit single. The natural association was that we were a techno band, but that wasn't necessarily true. We were going around playing clubs with a hip-hop sort of thing, break-beat based; it wasn't acid. We sort of mixed it up and we have never been scared to do that. Sort of mixing out flavors, where you tend to get people stuck in one groove... then jungle or techno. That sort of attitude. It's like that's my tribe, it's not a football sport. It's an indication of how we behave.

I/F: One more thing I wanted to address: very few electronic artists can make a live performance interesting. Is that something that you have considered from the beginning?

PH: Yes, the bands that we used to listen to, like Cabaret Voltaire, used to always play live. You never think of not playing live; it is a very natural thing. We came from this background of going to see bands, so how else would you build up a fanbase and get people to know your music other than playing live? All we do is set up our studio on stage and jam and improvise with the structure. As we started getting to play with other people, you discover so many other people putting around with a bunch of bad go-go dancers performing to a tape. They wouldn't even let the singer sing. Then you did meet other people who did play live, but there were very few. What worked well with us, because of this old PA thing, if you hit the charts or a club oriented hit, you would get club owners asking them to come up. So you get a lot of bands coming in to do this DAT thing, then when we turned up they were surprised. It was good for us because the clubs were a good outlet for us. It has built up from there and we've not looked back. It's been good.

end

crash worship

Live performances are normally the first things that come up when someone discusses Crash Worship, therefore, it would be a sin to not mention them. Crash Worship is a touring percussion (NOT tribal percussion) ensemble, and the live shows are the focus of the band's existence. They are quite versatile and will play in almost any location including junkyards, warehouses, and even on bridges. They are more prone to show up in less traditional venues because it gives them the freedom to put everything into a performance to make it an experience not to be forgotten.

It is not possible to pinpoint the exact time that the band was formed; the band is constantly evolving as people have come and gone over the years. There have been periods when they had a good line-up, and other times when "it was just silly until we found the right person again," as Markus Wolff put it. Regarding the line-up for the Summer '96 tour, Wolff said, "things have changed again, but I've enjoyed it."

Musically, Crash Worship are nothing short of incredible. Two and a half hours of intense drumming that will not let you sit still until they are through with you. Song after song, their performance captivates the listener in an almost hypnotic manner, but the realization that something is burning creates an instinctive alertness to the moment. The band's love of fireworks is apparent throughout the crowd as they are witness to a wide variety of flaming objects being set off throughout the venue. Their fourth of July celebration in Denver came complete with a flaming lawn mower. As if that isn't enough to make a person content with the admission price, there was also a wide selection of fruits, wine, milk, chocolate, water, feathers, more fire, and smoke. If this sounds a bit bizarre, then attendance at the next Crash Worship show should be mandatory; it'll all make sense then.

Needless to say, with a performance like this, it is no wonder that they have built up a large following from word of mouth. But with word of mouth, you also get myths and rumors. So how does a band like Crash Worship combat falsehoods about themselves? Especially since they have been known to contribute a fair share of misinformation, by having other people who aren't in the band do an interview for them. What a novel idea.

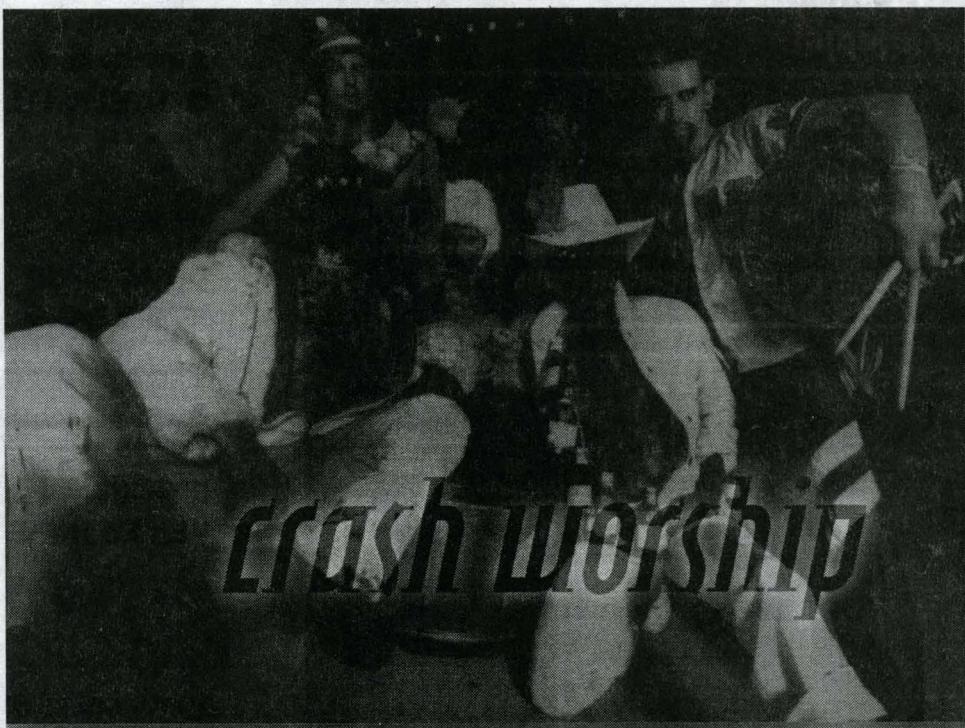
Well, we felt pretty confident that we had the real Markus Wolff, so we progressed with the discussion and addressed the topic of their releases. Perhaps not as well known as their live performances, the Crash Worship releases are literal works of art. From their early cassettes, all the way through their most recent CD releases, the beauty of the music is almost matched with the creativity in the packaging.

The "Flow" 12" is one of the most unique items in their discography. Released in the late '80s, it started out as a compilation album for a college recording class. Every person in the class was allowed to contribute one song and each semester an album was released containing the students' work. When "Flow" was submitted to be included on one of these releases, they requested that it be the final track on a side. Instead of letting the albums sit around in collect dust, they gathered up 175

copies of them and silk screened one side with a gold design, thus rendering it unplayable. On the other side, they carved a design over all of the tracks except for theirs, which would be the only one left playable. New labels were created, a sleeve designed, and then the item was released as an official Crash Worship 12". Quite impressive, but other releases exhibit similar creative thought in packaging as well: the "Pillar of Fire" 12" is interesting with its intricate etching on the B-side; the cassettes, *This* and *The Science of Ecstasy*, came with hand made covers and large pamphlets of a variety of drawings; and *Triplemania II* comes in two distinct packages, one in a copper and paper sleeve and the other in a clear jewel case. The extra attention to detail in each release reflects the pride of the band in what they create. This pride is noticed by the average consumer, contrary to the thinking of certain labels, who feel that quantity is better than quality. "People have been short-changed by this CD shit," states Wolff regarding his ideas on the comparison of CDs to vinyl. "All the sudden LP size artwork has shrunken down to CD size and now you need a magnifying glass to look at it." He further emphasized his dislike for CDs because of their questionable durability, "CDs get fucked up so easily; where records may get scratchy, they'll still play and sound okay."

The brevity of Crash Worship's discography can be attributed to their focus on their live performances, but that does not mean that they hide from the recording studio. 1994 brought the very first full length studio album known as *Triplemania II* in all of its wonder. Literally a world apart from their live sound, as can be sampled on *Spontaneo*, the studio opens up a treasure chest of possibilities that create a different take on their unique style of music.

Even more curious than the studio production of *Triplemania II* was their contribution to the *Rub Out the World* compilation being assembled by Jeph Jermain for his Big Body Parts label. With the theme of the compilation being sound collage works, Crash Worship strayed a bit from their usual percussion orientation and created a song composed of samples.



Not as captivating as their usual work, but the result is rather interesting. If anything, it demonstrates the versatility of the band to adapt their skills to an alternate medium.

Sad to say, but in order to enjoy "Bullets For Breakfast" or some of the other tracks scattered across additional compilations, it is necessary to seek out the compilations themselves. Asesinos was the collection of some of their favorite past works previously unavailable on CD, but there are no plans for another collection of retrospective material in the near future. "We are more of a forward looking band," states Wolff.

Regarding releasing new/live material, there is discussion of a possible split 10" with The Tribes of Neurot featuring live material from the most recent tour. Other future releases that are under consideration include another live video and a vinyl edition of Triplemania II complete with new packaging.

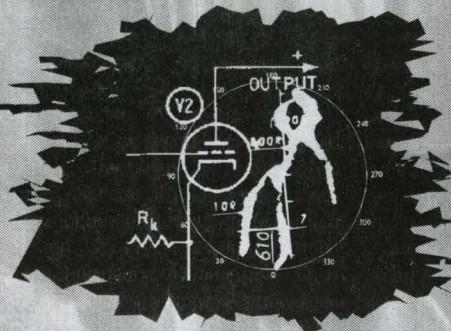
When not performing with Crash Worship, Markus Wolff bides his time with a variety of alternate interests. He enjoys reading about history, religion, and mythology. Being good friends with those kooky sound manipulators known as Big City Orchestra, Wolff's contributions can be found on their Greatest Hits and Test Tones Vol. II. He has also done occasional performances with Neurosis and Amber Asylum.

During a side discussion on television viewing preferences, Markus noted an interest in having a Crash Worship video featured on Beavis and Butthead. With the understanding that Crash Worship's style of musical expression does not fit in with the accepted "norm" of MTV's selections for spoon-feeding the masses, their only possible hope for exposure through this medium is on Beavis and Butthead. In any case, Crash Worship would find it very amusing to have their work featured, but given the nature of their live shows, this is very ironic considering the one word that is no longer allowed to be uttered on Beavis and Butthead...FIRE.

end

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ruby

Lesley Rankine, the voice and brains of Ruby, is one tough bitch. Head-strong and talented, there is no doubt that she will continue to amaze audiences with her presence and voice. From Silverfish to Pigface, and now to Ruby, Rankine has proved that, in this male dominated industry, it doesn't always take testosterone to do a man's job.

I/F: Was the push towards recording the album completely digitally from Mark (Mark Walk, the other member of Ruby)?

LR: Well, that was just the gear that he'd started working on. Before hand, he'd only used it when working on vocals. I really wanted to get into a more technological process, I wanted to use samplers and stuff like that. When I saw him using it when he was doing a bit of engineering on the Skinny Puppy album (The Process), I just loved it and I wanted to use it on the album.

I/F: Do you feel that you sacrificed spontaneity while writing or did you know what you were getting into?

LR: No, I think that it [recording digitally] totally adds to it. Working with a band, with four other people, with a bunch of guitars, is much less spontaneous than being able grab tiny bits of sounds and doing something kind of wacky with it.

I/F: Did you have a bigger hand in writing on Saltpeter than you did working with Silverfish?

LR: Yes. And much more to do with production and stuff.

I/F: What was the main route that you took with production?

LR: It was basically just widdling around with sounds. I went with in with a load of ideas for kinds of sound qualities and arrangement ideas and stuff like that. For the most part, we started with the basic elements of what we both wanted and we just experimented a lot. You know - worked on things, and worked on them until they worked. Because we were using computers and a lot of digital stuff, we also wanted to mix that up with using stuff, like an old drum kit that had been lying in the garage for five years, and this microphone we had that we called the "shit mic." That was this old sports commentator's mic that Mark found in a junk shop. It was mixing old clanky sounds with very clean technology kind of processes.

I/F: Being a woman in a male dominated industry, have you found it hard to get in and do things?

LR: I think it would be for other women, who were maybe not in my kind of position. I'd already done the rock band thing for years; and I was involved in Pigface. I started using samplers when I was living in Chicago for three months with my friend Shawn. He had an Akai S-900; so, he showed me how to use it, and I just loved it. From then on, I just decided that that was the way I was going to go. I think that this whole studio environment is a boy's club. I hate studios anyway.

I/F: Did bringing in Bill Rieflin help with writing, or did it just add flavor?

LR: It was to add in a real drummer, a good drummer. Mark was doing some drums beforehand - and he's really kind of sloppy. We needed someone who was a bit tighter. He played a live kit. All the drums are live, the odd

little bit of other percussion and the samples are played, but all the drums are live - and just treated. Like, we used the shit mic through a Leslie amp, through a (Alesis) Quadraverb, on Bill's drums.

I/F: Does writing lyrics on the fly make it odd to sing them over and over again on stage?

LR: No, They're my lyrics. I have lyrics that kick about for years. There's four lines there that mean absolutely nothing. When I eventually find a context to them, and they find a meaning in their own right, a song starts to mean something to me. It doesn't get monotonous to me at all. I love doing it. That is my main love - singing.

I/F: Did you have a hand in writing with Silverfish?

LR: I didn't really play anything in Silverfish. I helped write some of the arrangements, but I didn't play anything.

I/F: Was Silverfish your first band?

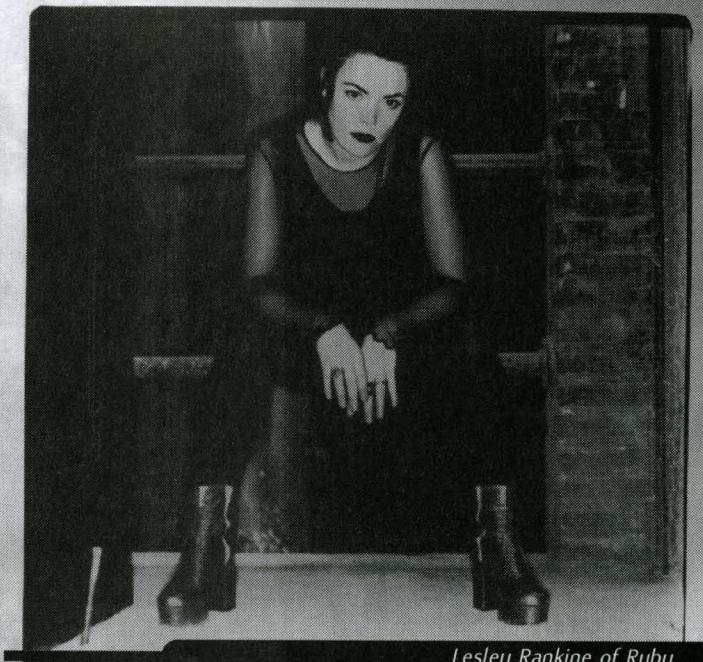
LR: No, I was in a couple of other bands that shall remain nameless; no one's ever heard of them anyway.

I/F: Did writing and recording digitally make it easier to translate the songs live?

LR: I think the mechanics would be the same, but it does groove more.

I/F: What did you use to record the album?

LR: Protools was the program that we used. To me, it's perfect, because it's all visual. You can see the kick drum sound wave and the vocal sound wave and stuff like that. It's the way my head works and it's totally logical. Although, when we were using it, it was ProTools 3, and it had just come out. There was a lot of little fuck-ups and bugs in it that Mark managed to sort out. He'd phone up Digidesign and tell them how it affects their stuff. When we first started out doing the album, we were using a Quadra 950 on a 20" monitor, in a tiny little basement that was about six foot square with an old desk, and a big rack of analog effects. There was no air conditioning and one door that we couldn't open most of the time because it was too loud. It kept crashing all the time. When we were writing "Tiny Meat," after we had worked on it for a week, I was left alone with it and I totally ruined it. Mark had to go in and retrieve it. We sequenced stuff initially and then, most of the time, dumped that once the song was written; we used that [the initial sequences] for writing vocals over, then we'd dump the original, and just start



Lesley Rankine of Ruby

writing the instrumentation totally in Protools. It gives it a lot more live feel. People seem to think that this was totally made by machine. What's the difference between Protools and a tape machine? - except that it's digital and you can fuck around with it a lot easier. You don't end up sitting in yards of unused tape.

end



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KAREN HAN



"...there are unexpected sound motifs that make this very compelling listening." — JAM July 1996

"truly amazing" — THE GAVIN REPORT July 1996

"spacious and ferocious, darkly implicative, lots of personal computerizing to dig deep into for its sake." — LA WEEKLY August 2, 1996

"alternately lovely and coldly intellectual..." — SERVO September/October 1996

F E A T U R I N G :

Mark Mothersbaugh of Devo.

Darrin Varragen of Shinjuku Thief.

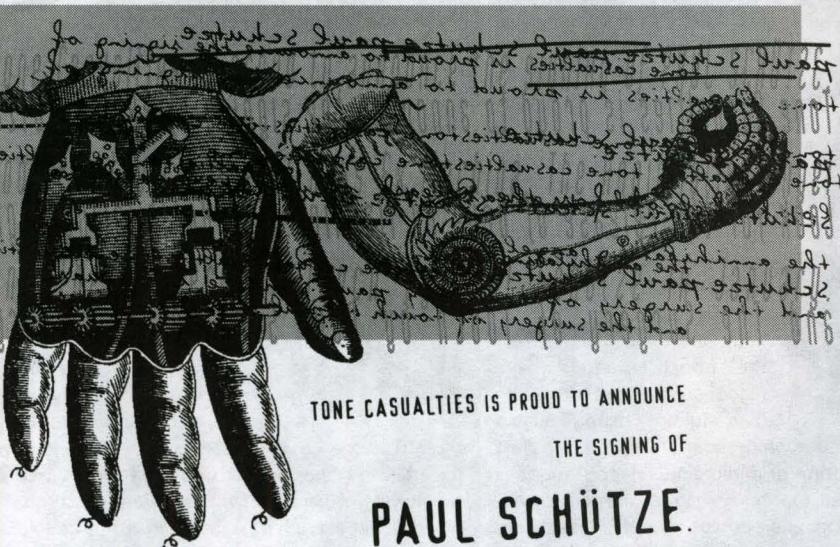
FACE featuring Paris Sedanis,

formerly of Christian Death.

Hungry Ghost, Andras Wahorn, DS Eccles.

Gabor Csupo, Eon Flux composer

Drew Neumann and Opus Crobag.



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last minute reviews

(that would have reflowed most of the magazine, so we stuck them back here)



Bytet
First Bite
self-release
First Bite is Bytet's self released debut CD. With vocals that could be mistaken for Johnny Lydon or Jello

Biafra and music that would work nicely as a soundtrack to any Nintendo game, this is quite an entertaining CD. The second track, "Time to Play," will justify any effort expended to acquire this disc because it is (or, at least, closely resembles) a remake of the *Knight Rider* theme. All of the music seems to be close in relation to the early 80's techno-ish music and literally the music that Nintendo incorporates into any of their games from the past three years. Standing alone, this is a decent album, but there is a lot of room for growth and diversification. [Dave Henderson]

(Bytet, 6531 Spruce St., Anchorage, AK 99507)



deep
mobile
thickface Records

Jim Marcus (Die Warzau) and **Jason More** (Pigface, July) team up to release this CD of Tribal-Ambient-Jazz-whatev-

er music with the help of lots of Chicago folk, including *Preston Klik* (Big Hat, My Scarlet Life), *Mars Williams* (Psychedelic Furs, Die Warzau, etc.) and others. The result is a varied and intense collection of musical styles climaxing in a percussive track with all the fervor of *Crash Worship*. Overall this CD is an excellent representation of the diverse Chicago music and art scene. [anon_devi]

Leæther Strip

The Rebirth of Agony
Zoth Ommog/Music Research

Underneath the Laughter and Solitary Confinement still remain the strongest Leæther Strip albums to date, but ever since, Clause Larson has not been able to recreate the power that was contained within those recordings. *Legacy of Hate and Lust* left a lot to be desired, but *The Rebirth of Agony* shows considerable signs of improvement. In addition to the trademarked Leæther Strip sound, there are new song styles that have been added that signify a strong progression forward. There is a diminished use of vocal and beat distortion, and almost a minimalist approach to song structure in some areas. Thankfully, the sustained tone that has been all too predictably layered into almost all of the songs of the past three CDs is slowly being phased out of the current songs, and fresh new concepts are slowly becoming visible. New drum samples, no movie samples, vocals without effects, it is very refreshing to hear these new

additions to Leæther Strip's work, but I would give him another album or two to rediscover his potential. [Dave Henderson]

(Zoth Ommog/Music Research, Norsk-Data-Str. 3, 61352 Bad Homburg Germany)

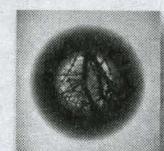


Phlegm
Ashes
ReLoad Ambient

In the midst of a hollow autumn night, where the wind bellows and the leaves fall, there arise the doubts of an alien industry. It is cold. The faint whispers of automation weep within cast-iron veins, shrouding the shrill yearnings of triumph. In desperation, grinding gears begin to claw through the stainless steel barrier of its flesh; a mucous lump explodes from the throat. It is the insoluble Phlegm which churns anxiety. From the bottom, it rumbles in catastrophe as it drones with haunting voices and deep strings. The foreboding it casts is the shadow of a lunar-industrial-psycho-thriller soundtrack. But with more tension than a six million watt load, it burns the protective insulation to ash, for this Phlegm tells a tale of wicked deterioration. Haunting and mesmerizing, strange movie samples drip through a collage of extraterrestrial angst. Anxiety glows through resistance, as the mucous begins to flow. A continuous journey, Ashes integrates the psyche into its own reality, that distant plane deep within the netherlands. Ambient reflections provide just enough breathing space before being hurled back through the nightmarish aqueduct. And having survived, one finds at the end, two hip gems of tekno refreshment, for the movie always concludes with a happy ending. [brian rowe]

ability. Even if you have to risk severe personal injury to acquire this CD, go ahead...it will be worth it. [Dave Henderson]

(Earache Records, 295 Lafayette St., Suite 915, New York, NY 10012)



V/A
Neural Network Volume 1
Neuro Net Recordings

Having successfully thwarted the pressures of nanotech corporation's underground plot, the city may sleep again.

The trials of the fast-paced-high-action-thriller sequence grants a booty of exhaustion; but it's night, and the scene awaits. The glint of relaxation finally enters those cyber-view eyes, as the internal clock-sync begins to wind down. The pico-membranes in the sake start to mesh with occipital brain fibers; the visions amplify as this neural network /volume 1/ is realized. What is found is a refreshing excursion into the Japanese electronic movement... And you won't find Merzbow here; this op-dream is a feel good journey with bassy beats and hip tunes. Here, there are fields that sway from the movements of subtle instrumentation. The tide crests over monumental boulders, creating a thin mist of samples that hang like dew atop the blades of rhythm. A scene filled with introspection, something exists within this album. It is alive, and it fuels the source with energy, enhancing its very network of neural patterns. Eyes open. Though the program has finished, the music continues with its unique Japanese flavor. The presence of this compilation of Neuro Net Recordings transmits a signal beyond that of noise. It is style. [Brian Rowe]

(neuro net recordings mute@apt.fxis.fujixerox.co.jp)



Signs ov Chaos
Frankenscience
Earache Records

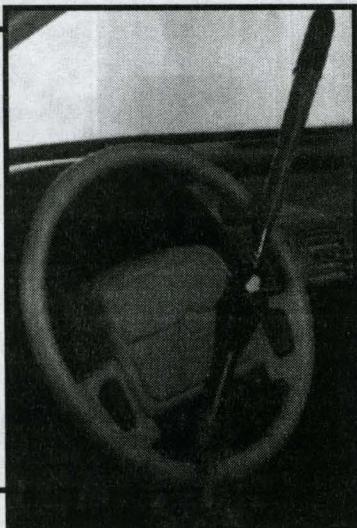
Technohead and the rest of the popcore bands have made quite impression with their style of "happy" techno music, and that impression tends to manifest itself in the form of a migraine. "Happy" music is one thing, but too much "happy" music is downright annoying, and perhaps from this realization, we can come to find out how Michael Wells (of Technohead) has produced this dark, rhythmic collection of songs. A manifestation of his dark alter ego (no one can be happy all the time), Frankenscience is a superb collection of danceable beats from the more shady side of life. Fourteen tracks of varying presentation, that seem to melt into one another effortlessly without any cumbersome lyrics to spoil the mood make up the content of this disc. Where the appeal of Technohead may be limited, Signs ov Chaos would seem to have the broader sense of appeal to people of varying moods and dancing



various artists
Goth Box
Cleopatra Records

Leave it to Cleopatra to rape as much as they can from a genre that is years past its prime and cash in on its recent resurgence in popularity. This tremendous undertaking comes on four CDs and features, well, simply lots of bands. They range from obscure to obvious and everything in-between. Truth be told, there really aren't enough rare or exclusive tracks on here to entice anyone except the neophyte. The thing that made *There is No Time*, the RAS DVA four CD set that came out last year, so nice was that almost all of the tracks were either from obscure bands or, in the few cases where more well known bands contributed, with exclusive tracks. With *Goth Box*, it is presented as more of a tribute to the genre and a history lesson, along the lines of *The Industrial Revolution* CDs, also from Cleopatra. What I can say about this is the beautiful presentation and the well-chosen tracks. These make up for everything else. [Andy Waggoner]

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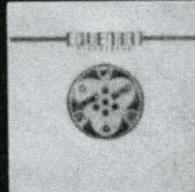
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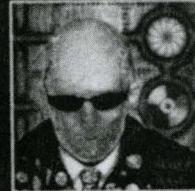
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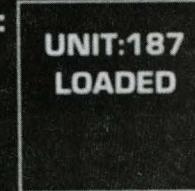
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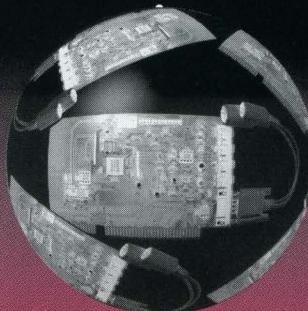
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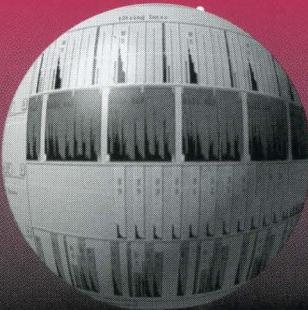
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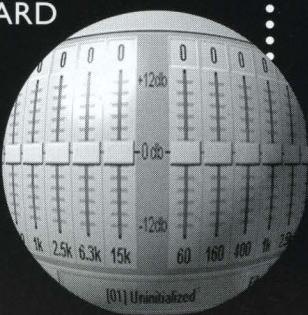


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